# 3. Retrieval practice; testing yourself regularly will improve your performance.

As the saying goes; "practice makes perfect" or put another way, acquiring skills and knowledge takes time and effort. The only way to know if your practice is working is by testing yourself.

As it turns out, evidence shows that testing is one of the most important contributing factors to aid your revision and it can drastically improve your memory. Answering questions strengthens your memory as you are retrieving the must – know information through testing with proper feedback.

The data speaks for itself. In one experiment,[4] two groups were given some information to study One group studied the information and then reviewed it some more. The other group studied the information and were then tested on their knowledge. What were the results? Quite surprising actually!

Testing yourself after studying can be better than studying more
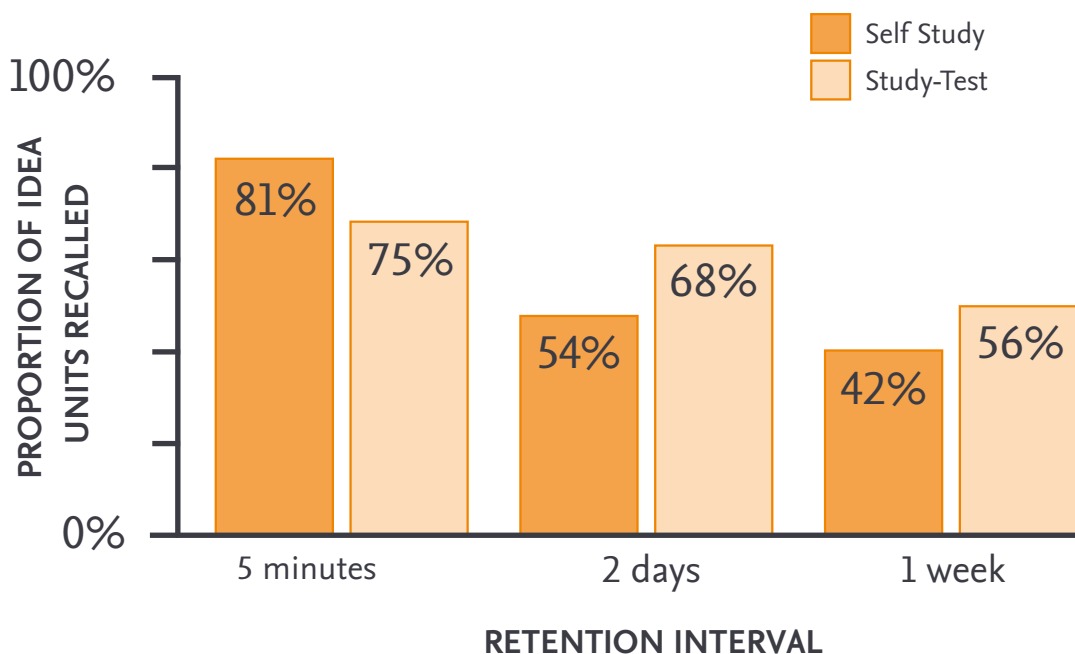
While initially, it may seem better to study more, over time you are much more likely to retain the information if you test yourself. This is even true if the tests are given without actual feedback. This surprising phenomenon is called the testing effect!

So how can you implement this in your revision? Firstly, identify the critical knowledge that you want to learn. It could be the Krebs cycle or the pathophysiology of atherosclerosis, you name it. Once you have established the vital bits you want to learn, you'll need to test yourself on it. Then you can check yourself in spaced intervals. This not only will help you learn (as per the testing effect) but it will also give you more motivation to study as you'll see how you are learning along the way! Additionally, it will get you more used to answering questions so that you feel more prepared when it comes to the exams.

Some ideas on how you can test yourself:

- Flashcards
- Practice questions online
- Questions in textbooks
- Getting friends to quiz you in a study group
- Past papers

So, when in doubt, test!