

IS ADDERALL A QUICK FIX TO HIGHER GRADES?

With finals around the corner students often look for competitive advantages in the classroom. Prescription drugs, dubbed “academic steroids,” such as *Adderall*, *Ritalin*, *Concerta*, and *Dexedrine* are used by college students to enhance their academic performance. Students say the drug boosts cognitive function and enables them to study for hours with full concentration without getting fatigued.

LEGAL ISSUES

- These are Schedule II controlled substances regulated by the Drug Enforcement Administration.
- **The *minimum* federal sentence for first-time possession is five years.**



It is against federal law to use these medications without an authorized prescription from a physician. Students who share or sell their prescription drugs are abusing a medical privilege, breaking the law, and face severe penalties if caught.

SO WHAT’S THE DOWN SIDE? These drugs are powerful stimulants used to improve focus for people with diagnosed ADD or ADHD, and should be used only as prescribed with ongoing medical supervision. When used by students who don’t have a legitimate medical need for these medications, they give an unfair advantage comparable to the advantage some athletes seek by using anabolic steroids to enhance their performance. This is widely regarded as a form of academic cheating.

PHYSICAL EFFECTS:

- An amphetamine with a high addictive potential, both physical and psychological.
- ADHD drugs such as Adderall and Ritalin boost levels of dopamine and norepinephrine in the mesolimbic reward pathways in the brain - the same chemical process created by methamphetamine and cocaine.
- When crushed and snorted they give a rush similar to cocaine.
- Medical risks include increased risk of seizures, stroke, and heart arrhythmia that can lead to sudden death.
- Causes rapid heartbeat, increased blood pressure, and an increased sense of anxiety.
- Insomnia, impotence, dizziness, dry mouth, headache.
- Non-prescribed users often crash into exhaustion as the drug wears off.
- Psychological dependence - quitting can still be difficult when your brain on Adderall consistently outperforms your brain without Adderall on board.
- Using these drugs without medical supervision can lead to psychotic symptoms including paranoia and hallucinations.

DATA:

- 19.6% of W&L students used “study drugs” in the past year (CORE survey, 2011); **which means 80% of W&L students do not rely on these drugs to make it through the year including during the exam crunch period.**
- It is estimated that 34.5% of college students admitted using a “study drug” in 2012.