Learning from an Exam

1. Compare what you thought would be on the exam to what was on the exam. (By doing this, you can determine if your study time is being well spent.)
   - For problem solving exams: Compare the exam to the homework/problem sets.
     a. How were the problems similar?
     b. How were they different?
     c. Did the exam require you to combine different types of problems?

   - For all exams: Compare the exam to your reading and class notes.
     a. Did you emphasize and understand the right concepts?
     b. Did the exam require you to make connections between different readings or ideas?

2. Categorize the errors you made. Determine why you missed each item.
   - Were your errors preparation errors?
   - Did you study the right material?
   - Were there key concepts or ideas that you didn't review?
   - Did you try to study too much material too fast, as the deadline approached?
   - Were your errors test-taking errors?
   - Did you read the directions carefully?
   - Did you misinterpret questions or information?
   - Did you spend so much time on the one question that you didn't have enough time for others?
   - Were you careless in computations?
   - Did you poorly organize the answer or poorly support an answer?
   - Did you write too much and expose lack of knowledge or write too little?
   - Do you have trouble correctly answering a specific type of question?

3. Decide how you can avoid the above problems on your next exam. (i.e. maybe you need to prepare differently, maybe you need to slow down to avoid making careless mistakes, or maybe you would benefit from reading tips on how to answer essay questions, etc.

4. For problem solving courses, try re-doing problems that you had difficulty with on the exam. For all types of courses, reconsider your answers, perhaps outlining a more thorough or correct response.

5. Review the exam with your professor. Ask your professor for specific criticism or ways to improve your test-taking skills in the course.