

Anxiety control during the test...

- Take a break as you need to.
- Some quick stress relievers:
 - stretch your arms and legs in your seat;
 - close your eyes for a moment;
 - look out the window at nature for a minute;
 - tense and relax your muscles.
- Eat something if that helps you relax.
- Ask the instructor a question.
- Counter negative thoughts with hopeful ones like, "I don't have to be perfect."
- Focus on answering the question rather than on what grade you're going to get or others' performances.

After the test...

- Reward yourself for the effort you made.
- Don't beat yourself up or dwell on possible mistakes.
- Learn from any mistakes you have made.
- Relax a little while.
- Connect with a friend to de-stress.



RESOURCES:

- Counseling Center (S-254) (352) 395-5508. The Counseling Center offers individual help with test anxiety, study skills, and personal issues.
- Math lab (G-14) (352) 395-5385.
- Writing lab (G-06) (352) 395-5392.
- Library (V Building) (352) 395-5406.
- Office of Diversity (S-112) (352) 395-5486. The Office of Diversity offers free tutoring.
- Student Support Services (L-51) (352) 395-5068. Student Support Services offers a variety of services for eligible students.



REDUCING TEST ANXIETY



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REDUCING TEST ANXIETY

What is test anxiety? You may experience uneasiness, apprehension, and nervousness before, during, or after an exam. Your stomach can do flips, or you may feel a sense of impending doom.

What's normal and what's extreme? Almost everyone experiences some anxiety that can even help motivate us to prepare for the test. However, too much anxiety can interfere with top performance on a test, and grades can be affected.

How can you deal with test anxiety? Fortunately, help is available. There are many ways to reduce anxiety and put tests in perspective. You don't have to eliminate test anxiety, just bring it down to helpful levels.

Be prepared! Preparation is the best way to reduce anxiety, so it's beneficial to:

- Avoid "cramming" for a test.
- Attend all classes.
- Study regularly during the semester.
- Be efficient in study habits.
- Meet with instructors during office hours and ask questions in class.
- Be familiar with the syllabus to know expectations and due dates.
- Study with a group if that is helpful.
- Use campus resources, such as the writing lab, the math lab, the library, and tutoring.
- Use time effectively; for example, study between classes, stay on campus to study, and keep a written schedule that includes study time (plan at least two hours of preparation for every hour of class).
- Ask yourself what might be on the test as you prepare.
- Get help early from your instructor, a counselor, or other students if you do not understand how to prepare.
- Develop good study habits, such as "SQ3R" (Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review) when reading your textbook.

Be Prepared! (cont.)

- Make flashcards and review them often.
- Learn how to take good notes, and then go over them often and right before the test. Make outlines and summary sheets.

Meet your basic needs! You are a whole person, not just a test taker. Remember to...

- Eat well and exercise regularly, even when preparing for tests.
- Maintain friendships and recreational pursuits so you'll feel connected and happy.
- Get plenty of sleep the night before the test. It's better to get some sleep than to stay up all night studying.
- Say "No" to No-Doze or too much caffeine. Small amounts of caffeine may be helpful.
- Do some relaxing activities before the test.
- Dress for success...get comfortable.
- Eat lightly before an exam so you are not overly full, but have good energy.

Before the test...

- Check your Self-Talk. Your beliefs and thoughts often precede your feelings. Anxious students tend to say things like, "Everyone else will do better than me on this test," or "I'm not smart in ...," or "If I don't do well on this test, I'll probably fail the course," or "These are trick questions."
How do you feel after talking to yourself this way? Would you ever tell a good friend these things about them?
- Become aware of your own Self-Talk. Try this exercise:
 - Write down the thoughts you say to yourself about an upcoming test you feel anxious about.
 - Then, argue those thoughts as if you were encouraging a good friend. Dispute each one.
 - Write down encouraging thoughts that you can substitute, like, "I'm glad I'm preparing early for this test," or "I'm going to concentrate on one question at a time, and

Before the test... (cont.)

- then keep a good pace during the test," or "I'm a good-enough student to pass and even do well on this test."
- Imagine a big red STOP sign when negative thoughts come into your head.
- Program your mind for success. Positive thinking can really help you!
- Visualize yourself doing well and getting a high grade on the test.
- Aim high!
- Reward yourself after studying instead of engaging in avoidance behaviors. Call someone and commit to studying, then call after you have achieved your goal of studying.
- Practice relaxation exercises regularly. You can learn these from professional tapes, or by coming to the Counseling Center for help.

The day of the test...

- Eat a light meal so you have provided your brain with energy.
- Arrive early so that you can choose a good seat.
- Do some relaxation exercises like deep breathing, shrugging your shoulders, rolling your neck.
- Avoid classmates who are anxious and upset your stability.
- Read the directions and review the entire test. Then, plan out how much time you need for different sections.
- Work on the easiest parts first.
- Avoid distractions. Don't give a second thought to the person sitting next to you; some may finish early.
- Maintain awareness of time and keep on track.
- For essay tests, make a short outline to follow.
- Write important formulas or information in the margins to refer to as you take the test.
- Allow time to review your answers, and go back to ones you were unsure of. Change answers only if you are sure!