



Test Anxiety

It's not unusual to experience some degree of anxiety during tests and exams. However, for some students this can become an impediment. If your test anxiety has gone beyond what might be considered "normal," or if you want to avoid reaching that point, you may want to try the suggestions listed below.

Before the test – be prepared

- Don't cram – plan enough time to study and review
- Take advantage of available workshops, tutoring, review sessions
- Develop a positive attitude and reasonable expectations
- Take care of yourself – eat, sleep, exercise, and relax appropriately
- Develop good study strategies and test-taking skills
- Write down your worries about the test and leave them behind – a ten-minute pre-write just before an exam reduces anxiety and frees up working memory

During the test

- Arrive a few minutes early and settle in
- Relax; breathe slowly and deeply
- Jot down formulas, definitions, etc. in the margin if you're afraid you might forget them
- Scan the test briefly and plan how to budget your time
- Read the directions carefully
- If you don't know an answer, don't dwell on it – circle it, move on, and come back later

If your anxiety starts to rise . . .

- Inhale and exhale slowly and deeply (2-3 times)
- Stretch your arms and legs
- Focus on the task at hand, not the dire "what ifs"
- Stay in the here and now
- Use positive self-talk ("I can do this, I'm ready for this test, everything's OK")
- Use positive imagery – recall a time or place that you remember as peaceful or happy and picture it in your mind for a few minutes

Remember

- This is one exam in one course in one semester of your college career.
- You are not your grades.
- Learn from your test – What worked? What didn't? What needs to change?