

Test Anxiety Techniques

General preparation/building confidence:

- Develop good study habits
- Develop good time management techniques
 - Avoid Procrastination, distractions, laziness
 - Schedule study time and time for breaks
- Organize material to be studied and learned
 - Create a step by step approach
 - Minimize feelings of being overwhelmed
- Try not to allow outside pressures- success/failure consequences (grades, graduation), peer pressure, competitiveness, etc. interfere with study and prep time.
- Review your past performance on tests to improve and learn from past experiences.

Test preparation to reduce anxiety:

- **Approach the exam with confidence:**
 - Use strategies you think will help you to personalize success: visualization, logic, talking to yourself, practice, study groups, journaling, etc.
 - View the exam as an opportunity to show how much you've studied and to receive a reward for the studying you've done.
- **Be prepared**
 - Learn your material thoroughly and organize what materials you will need for the test.
 - Create a to-do list of material to be studied/reviewed.
- **Choose a comfortable location for taking the test**
 - Good lighting
 - Minimal distractions
- **Allow yourself plenty of time**
 - Don't study all the way up to exam time
 - Arrive a little early (not so early that it creates anxiety)
- **Avoid cramming**
- **Strive for a relaxed state of concentration**
 - Avoid speaking with any fellow students who have not prepared, express negativity, or will distract your preparation.
- **A program of exercise** is said to sharpen the mind
- **Get a good night's sleep**

- **Don't go to the exam with an empty stomach**
 - Fresh fruits and vegetables reduce stress
 - Stressful foods can include processed foods, artificial sweeteners, carbonated soft drinks, fried foods, junk foods, etc.

During the test:

- Read the directions carefully
- Budget your test taking time
- Change positions to help you relax
- If you go blank, skip the question and go on
- If you're taking an **essay test** and you go blank on the whole test, pick a question and start writing. It may trigger the answer in your mind
- Don't panic when students start handing in their papers
 - There's no reward for finishing first

Use relaxation techniques

- **Deep Breathing**
 - Breathe in slowly and deeply through your nose and feel your stomach (not your chest) extend.
 - Hold for a few seconds.
 - Pull in your stomach, forcing the air out and think "relax".
Repeat 2 or 3 times.
 - Why do this activity work
 - Deep breathing forces you to focus on something other than your anxiety.
 - Deep breathing creates an increase in white blood cells, this increase creates a sense of calm.

If you find yourself tensing and getting anxious during the test:

- **Relax; you are in control**
 - Take slow, deep breaths
- **Don't think about the fear**
 - Pause: think about the next step and keep on task, step by step
- **Use positive reinforcement for yourself:**
 - Acknowledge that you have done, and are doing, your best
- **Expect some anxiety**
 - It's a reminder that you want to do your best and can provide energy
Just keep it manageable.
- **Realize that anxiety can be a "habit"**
 - it takes practice to use it as a tool to succeed.

- **After the test, review how you did**
 - List what worked and hold onto these strategies
 - List what did not work
 - Celebrate that you are on the road to overcoming this obstacle