



Test Anxiety Tip Sheet for Students

Tips for Reducing Test Anxiety

Expect some anxiety. Stress is your body's warning mechanism - it's a signal that helps you prepare for something important that's about to happen - so use it to your advantage. Instead of reacting to the stress by dreading, complaining or fretting about the test with friends, take an active approach. Let stress remind you to study well in advance of a test.

Look after your physical health. Get a good sleep and eat a healthy breakfast the morning before the test.

Be prepared. Good study skills are important. Use **active** learning strategies; for example, ask yourself good questions that make you think about the information, create mind maps or other graphic organizers to summarize a unit, discuss the material with someone else. If you need help with study skills, don't wait until the day before the test to ask a classroom teacher, Program Support teacher or Guidance Counsellor for help.

Don't cram. Don't try to learn everything in one night. Study in pieces and try to review a little bit every day. "Drawing a blank" is common when students have crammed.

Pay attention to your thoughts. Watch out for any negative messages you might be sending yourself about the test, which can contribute to your stress. If you find yourself thinking negative thoughts, such as, "I'm never good at taking tests," replace them with positive messages that are practical and true, such as, "I've studied hard and I know the material, so I'm ready to do the best I can." Visualize yourself sitting in the classroom, doing well on the test.

Practice relaxation techniques. Use square breathing - breathe in for four seconds, hold for four seconds, breathe out for four seconds, hold for four seconds...repeat as many times as needed - as a technique to relax before and during a test. Slowing your breathing will increase your oxygen and help you regain focus. Practicing breathing exercises regularly (when you're not stressed) helps your body see these exercises as a signal to relax.

Be test-wise. Read the questions carefully. Read over the test and plan your approach; for example, you may want to answer the easy questions first, to build confidence and momentum. Don't be afraid to ask questions if you don't understand instructions or expectations. Be aware of point values for each section and plan your time accordingly. For additional study tips, visit: www.how-to-study.com

Don't give a test or exam more power than it deserves. A test measures how accurately you can answer certain questions on a given day. It does NOT measure how smart you are, or your worth as a person.

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Sources: <https://www.anxietybc.com/test-anxiety.php>
<http://kidshealth.org/en/teens/test-anxiety.html>

