

Test Anxiety

Some physical signs of test anxiety are...

- Feeling nauseous, perspiring, sweaty palms, headache, rapid heart beat, tense muscles, jittery (nervous)

Students who suffer from test anxiety frequently:

- experience mental blocks during the exam
- have difficulty organizing thoughts
- feel as if they studied all the wrong things
- have trouble concentrating
- remember answers after the exam
- do poorly even though they know the material

Causes of Test Anxiety

- Doubts about your own abilities
- Worrying about the expectations of others and how classmates are doing
- Thinking about past performance on tests (especially if poor!)
- Worrying about future impact of performance
- Concerns about preparation

How to **REDUCE** Test Anxiety

- Keep a positive attitude and develop reasonable expectations.
- Prepare well—**AVOID CRAMMING AND ALL-NIGHTERS!**
- Take practice exams in the same format that the test will be in.
- Keep physically healthy (i.e. appropriate eating, sleep, and exercise).
- Visualize yourself taking the test and doing well.
- Keep a realistic perspective—this is only a test, there will be others.
- Avoid others who are anxious or upset about the test.
- Focus only on the current test—not prior test performance, your final grade, etc.
- Don't compete with or compare yourself to others.
- Counter negative thoughts with more positive thoughts about your ability to succeed. Purposefully filling your mind with positive statements about yourself and your abilities can offset the negative self-talk.
- Maintain a realistic perspective on the consequences of test performance. One bad performance does not equate to absolute failure. If you find yourself focusing on possible extreme consequences of failure, develop more realistic phrases (i.e. This is just one exam) to repeat to yourself prior to and during the exam.
- If you begin to get anxious, take a minute to collect yourself, close your eyes, put your pen down, relax the muscles throughout your body, and take a few deep breaths.
- For general stress management, utilize deep breathing exercises, imagery and visualization, and muscle relaxation techniques.

****Everyone suffers from test anxiety to some degree. However, if test anxiety is unmanageable, you should seek professional help from the Counseling Center.*