

How to Beat Test Anxiety

I. Positive Self-Talk

- View tests as challenges, learning opportunities, or competitions—something that sparks your motivation
- Develop a believable mantra (or two) about why you will do well on the test
- Practice using your mantra as you study
- Before taking the test, remind yourself of all the ways you have studied and prepared

II. Deep Breathing

- Use diaphragmatic breathing only. Your belly should rise and fall, whereas your chest should not move
- Inhale through your nose for 6-8 counts
- Hold your breath for 4 counts
- Exhale for 6-8 counts, pushing the air out through pursed lips
- Hold your breath for 4 counts
- Repeat

III. Act, Don't Think

- Actively read test questions by underlining key phrases
- Write down what you know about a question as soon as you read it
- Plan your answers on paper, not in your head
- When stuck, write out all your options on paper along with the pros and cons of each

IV. Thought Stopping

- Notice times when your mind drifts off to worries about your performance
- Cut off the thought immediately by breathing deeply, tapping your foot, or closing your eyes
- Refuel yourself with positive self-talk (i.e., a mantra)
- Refocus on the test