

How to Beat Test Anxiety

1. Positive Self-Talk

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

2. Deep Breathing

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

3. Act, Don't Think

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

4. Thought Stopping

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

5. Test Preparation to Reduce Anxiety

- a. Be prepared!
- b. Allow yourself plenty of time to get to the room
- c. Strive for a relaxed state of concentration. Avoid speaking with fellow students who express negativity
- d. Exercise
- e. Get a good night's sleep
- f. Eat something before. Fresh fruits and vegetables are recommended to reduce stress. Stay away from processed foods, caffeine, and junk food.

6. During the Test

- a. Read the directions carefully
- b. Budget your test taking time
- c. If you go blank, skip the question and come back later
- d. Don't panic when others finish before you
- e. Use positive self-talk, deep breathing, and thought stopping

Everyone suffers from test anxiety to some degree. However, if test anxiety is unmanageable, you should seek professional help from the Counseling Center. 610-758-3880



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