Test Anxiety

Some physical signs of test anxiety are:
- Feeling nauseous, perspiring, sweaty palms, headache, rapid heart beat, tense muscles, jittery

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 performances 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, sleeping, and exercise)
- Visualize yourself taking the test and doing well
- Keep a realistic perspective -- this is only a test and 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.
- Maintain a realistic perspective on the consequences of test performance.
- 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 deep breaths.
- For general stress management, utilize deep breathing exercises, imagery and visualization, and muscle relaxation techniques.