



Academic Support Center

Coping With Test Anxiety

Most people experience some type of test taking anxiety. This is even common for people who've prepared extensively. However, test-taking anxiety often motivates students to study harder for tests, but it can be detrimental if it prevents them from studying, preparing properly, or concentrating during a test.

These strategies can help you handle extreme test taking anxiety:

Develop good study habits. One of the best ways to handle test-taking anxiety is through proper preparation. Besides preparing you for the questions on a test, studying will also build your confidence, which will decrease anxiety.

Be prepared. If you're completely prepared for a test to the point of being familiar with any question that could be asked, anxiety will dramatically decrease. There is little reason to experience anxiety for a test you didn't study for.

Don't cram! Cramming for an exam prior to taking it can increase anxiety. Those who take their time to properly prepare for an exam will experience less anxiety than those who decide to study a day or hours prior to one.

Get adequate exercise. Exercise relieves stress and increases mental function. It can also increase energy.

Get plenty of sleep. Not only is receiving adequate sleep necessary for good health, it is also a way to decrease anxiety. This is why it is recommended that you get enough sleep the night prior to a test. If you do not get enough sleep prior to a test, you will be fatigued and more anxious.

Get plenty to eat. Never take a test if you're hungry. You need the nutrients necessary for proper brain function and physical energy. Although many neglect to eat prior to a test because they don't want to take time away from last minute studying, it will increase test-taking anxiety.

Stay positive. Do not be overly pessimistic. Remain positive and concentrate on doing well on the test. If you dwell on negative thoughts, it will increase anxiety and make it more difficult to perform.

Focus on the learning experience. Do not be too hard on yourself if you do not perform up to your expectations on a test. Instead, learn from the experience, so you can make the necessary changes for the future. It is not worth it to stress out over something that is already finished.

Stay relaxed. Be sure to relax before taking a test. If you are struggling to relax, take deep breaths.