

Test-Taking Tips That Can Help You Manage Your Anxiety



Before You Take the Test

- Give your brain time to retain—start studying well in advance to avoid the stress of all-nighters. Cramming the night before will not help you retain the information over the long term.
- Schedule study time without distractions—no IMing, texting or facebooking.
- Study in the same room as the test or try to studying under similar conditions, such as in a room where others will be studying quietly—this can help with information recall.
- Learn from the past—look at how you studied for tests you did well on and try to do the same or similar things every time you study.
- Maintain healthy eating and sleeping habits (try to avoid excessive amounts of caffeine).
- Do not plan long study sessions; take multiple breaks—take a walk, call a friend, have a snack.
- Repetition can help—schedule multiple study sessions. The repetition can help your memory recall during the test.
- If you choose to study with others, study with those who you know will remain on task and be positive.

During the Test

- When you get to class, avoid talking with others who raise your anxiety...this may be everyone in the class. (Everyone is as freaked out as you are 😊.)
- Before beginning the test, take a few moments to get acclimated; flip through the entire exam and **read the directions carefully**; pay close attention to the wording of each question to be sure you understand what you are being asked.
- Plan out how much time you have for each section so that you give yourself enough time to complete the entire test. If you get stuck on a question, move on and come back to it later.
- If you feel your anxiety rising, take a few moments to breathe deeply; tense and relax your muscles and then continue with the test.
- Focus on your efforts and not the grade, or if someone is doing better than you. Being the first or last to finish the test is unimportant. Doing your best is what counts!
- Avoid putting yourself down during the test. Give yourself positive, encouraging statements. “I can do this!” feels a lot better than “I’m going to fail.”
- If allowed, don’t be afraid to get up and move. Take a break, get some water, or just sharpen your pencil (even if it doesn’t need sharpening).
- Don’t be afraid to talk to your professor. If you have a question or need clarification during the test, go up and ask.
- If you finish the test early, take a few minutes to review your answers. If you’re unsure about an answer, go with your gut.

After the Test

- Reward yourself! Go see a movie, hang out with friends, or have a good meal. Don’t obsess on how well you did; instead, focus on the accomplishment of finishing. Review what strategies worked or didn’t work and use that to help plan for your next test.