

OVERCOMING TEST ANXIETY

What is Test Anxiety:

Test anxiety is uneasiness or apprehension experienced before, during, or after an examination because of concern, worry, or fear. Almost everyone experiences some anxiety. But some students find that anxiety interferes with their learning and test taking to such an extent that their grades are seriously affected.

What Can You Do About Test Anxiety:

Fortunately, there is a great deal that you can do to keep the anxiety from interfering with your performance. First, it's important to know that you don't have to eliminate it entirely. It helps to be "up" for exams. You just want to reduce the anxiety to a manageable level.

Getting Prepared For the Exam:

Getting prepared is more than half the battle! See the reverse side for helpful tips.

SO HOW DO YOU GET TO BE SELF-CONFIDENT

Self Talk:

Research shows that the self-talk of test-anxious students almost always tend to be negative and self-defeating.

- "Everyone in the class is smarter and faster than I am."
- "I always mess up on tests."
- "If I don't do well on this exam, then I'll flunk the course."
- "These are trick questions."
- "This is a weed-out course."

Become aware of what you say to yourself. Try writing your negative thoughts down and then disputing each one with a positive statement. Start to encourage yourself as you would a friend. Repeating your positive statements to yourself will help reprogram your mind for success instead of for failure.

Other Techniques:

- Visualize yourself doing well and reaching your goals.
- Aim for an A level of understanding. Don't overprotect yourself by saying you'll be lucky to get a C, so why study more?
- Try not to compare yourself with others.
- Become an expert in learning what is going well and what you can do to improve. Collect data by keeping a journal.
- Reward yourself AFTER studying instead of getting involved in avoidance behaviors.
- Practice relaxing behaviors so that relaxation becomes an automatically learned response.
- Aim for a state of relaxed concentration. When you concentrate, you have all of your energy focused on your work with none wasted on worry.
- Take care of yourself by eating well and getting enough sleep.
- Plan time to exercise regularly and do it.

Getting prepared for the exam:

- Attend all of your classes, find out what you're expecting to know and when the exams are scheduled.
- Keep up with your work so that you can avoid "cramming" for exams.
- Become more efficient in your study habits.
- Have a study schedule that makes use of "wasted time".
- Study in a location where you can concentrate, get interested in the material, and give it your complete attention.
- Use a method such as Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review for reading your textbooks.
- Make flashcards and review them often.
- Learn how to take good notes. Go over them right after class and review periodically.
- Make outlines and summary sheets.
- Ask yourself, "What is the important information?"
- Being in a study group with motivated classmates is often helpful.
- In general, organized, self-confident students with efficient study habits may actually spend less time studying than others who receive lower grades.