



TEST ANXIETY

Tests are inevitable. We all have to take them. Quite a few of us dread them. How are you going to keep from getting your nerves in a knot over tests? Follow these suggestions:

- Attend all classes leading up to the test. It makes sense to learn as much of the material as you can and besides, teachers drop hints about what is on tests all the time.
- Study, study, study. And not just the night before the test. Study the material in advance, for a short period of time each day leading up to the test. Do not leave cramming for the day before your test. Do not do a last minute review.
- Ask for help if you are confused. Maybe your teacher will give you some extra help during office hours, or you could assist in finding a tutor or setting up a study group. Also, ask your mentor to help find and set up tutoring.
- Allow yourself plenty of time; arrive at the test location early.
- Choose a seat where you will not be easily distracted.
- Make sure you have the required pens, pencils, erasers, calculators, and anything else you will need, and that they are all in working order.
- Get enough sleep the night before the exam. Your brain needs to rest and recharge itself, so try for at least eight hours of shut-eye.
- Exercise may increase your alertness and sharpen your mind.
- Eat a good breakfast. Just like sleep, your body needs food to fuel itself. Your energy and concentration levels will be down if you don't eat, and your growling stomach will be somewhat disturbing.
- Avoid any use of drugs and alcohol, they can interfere with your mental ability.
- Know what the test is going to be on. Ask your teacher for specifics. Usually they will tell you it is on the material covered in chapters 10, 11, and 12, for example, or that it is on a certain topic.
- Ask what form and length the test will take. Will there be multiple choice or short answer questions? Will it be one page or ten?
- Don't dwell too much on how much of your final mark the test is worth. Every test is important. You should approach a quiz worth 10% of your final mark with the same seriousness as you approach a test worth 60% of your final mark. Do a reality check: how important is this exam in the grand scheme of things? Put it into perspective.
- Use abdominal breathing to help reduce anxiety. Place one hand on your abdomen, right beneath your rib cage. Inhale through your nose and feel your abdomen fill like a balloon. Count to three on your inhalation and then slowly exhale counting to four, feeling your abdomen contracting with the exhalation.
- When you start to write your test, take a deep breath and push everything else out of your mind. Concentrate solely on the subject until you are done.
- Use positive affirmations, say a phrase to help keep things in perspective. "I've done this before, I can do it again" or "I have all the knowledge I need to get this done."