

Test Anxiety

Tips for Reducing Test Anxiety

- Prepare for the test early and avoid cramming
- Get a good sleep the night before
- While you are waiting to take the exam avoid discussing it with others
- Breathe deeply
- Take a bathroom break to relax during the test if needed
- Replace negative thoughts with positive ones
- Visualize yourself reaching your goals
- Reward yourself after the exam is over

Questions?

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Experiencing anxiety before and during tests is a common aspect of student life. It is important to learn when your anxiety is interfering with your ability to adequately handle stressful situations. Anxiety itself is a normal, and necessary, human feeling that is an essential part of life. It serves as a form of adrenaline that promotes alertness and readiness. However, excessive anxiety can result in too much stress and can hinder performance.

What you believe determines how you feel and how you behave. Sometimes it's easy to get stuck in a maladaptive cycle of thoughts, feelings and behaviors. Negative thoughts can include "success is defined by GPA," "if I don't do well on this test I will flunk out of school," and "if I don't do well it means I am stupid." These thoughts lead to certain feelings, like anxiety. Subsequently, feelings of anxiety lead to behaviors like sweating, avoiding studying, and blanking out. After awhile, you will find yourself stuck in this loop.

If you are attempting to cope with test anxiety you have likely realized that too much anxiety can sabotage your test results. If you have ever experienced any of the symptoms listed below, you are not alone. Thankfully, test anxiety can be helped through a combination of improved study habits and test-taking skills, as well as practice with stress and anxiety management.

Possible Signs of Test Anxiety:

- Fear of failing before arriving to the exam
- Feeling tension as the exam is being handed out
- Trouble concentrating and distractibility
- Mental blocks despite hours of studying
- Physical symptoms: shortness of breath, sweating, increased heart rate
- Negative thoughts like: "I'm going to fail" "I'm stupid"
- Frustration at poor test grades after feeling like you knew the material better before taking the exam