

TAMING TEST ANXIETY

Helpful Tips

Preparation

Preparation is the best way to minimize text anxiety.

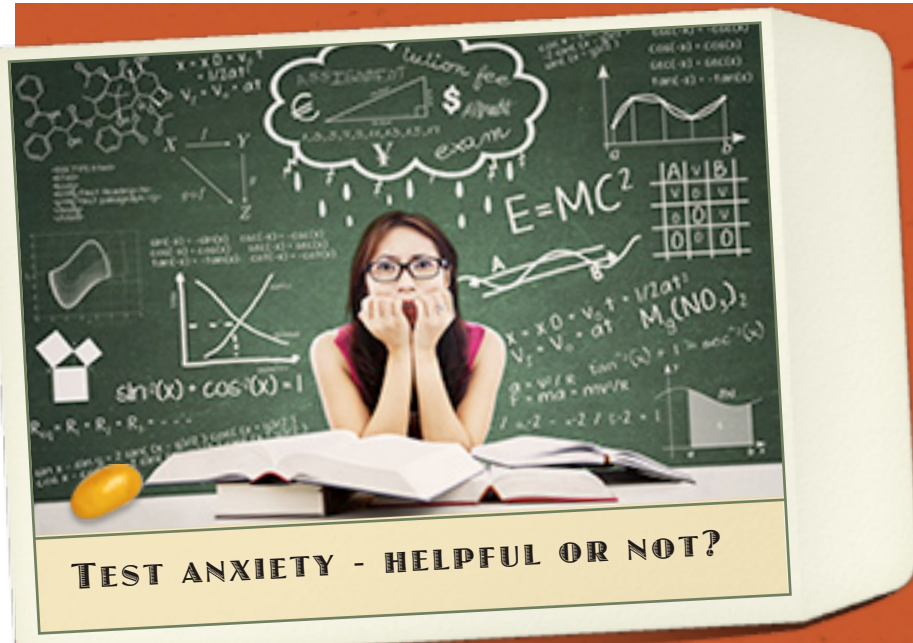
- Avoid "cramming" for a test.
- Master the main concepts of the course.
- When studying, ask yourself what questions may be asked and try to answer them.

Attitude

- Improving your perspective of the test-taking experience can actually help you enjoy studying and may improve performance.
- Don't overplay the importance of the grade - it is not a reflection of your self-worth nor does it predict your future success.
- Reward yourself after the test - take in a movie, go out to eat, or visit with friends.

Basics

- Good nutrition and exercise contribute to your emotional and physical well-being.
- Get plenty of sleep the night before - when you are overly tired you will not function at your absolute best.



TEST ANXIETY - HELPFUL OR NOT?

Nervousness can actually help motivate us, but too much can become a problem, especially if it interferes with our ability to prepare for and perform on tests. Fortunately, there are ways to reduce text anxiety.

DO YOU HAVE TEST ANXIETY?

To see if you have test anxiety, look over the following checklist and make a note of which ones are true for you:

- Worrying about the test distracts me from studying.
- I can't sleep well when a big test is coming up.
- I don't ever feel ready for a test, even if I study a lot.
- I can't relax physically before a test.
- I "freeze" when taking tests: I can't think and forget things I already know.
- My stomach becomes upset before important tests.
- I have negative thoughts while taking tests.
- My muscles become very tense when I take a test.
- I often have panicky feelings when I have to take a test.

If you checked several or more of these items, you likely have test anxiety that exceeds the normal nervousness associated with test taking. But you don't have to suffer from test anxiety forever. These three ideas will help you cope:

- 1) Embrace the anxiety (rather than fighting against it) by deciding to use it to your advantage.
- 2) Try to work on underlying psychological issues that may be contributing to the anxiety.



- 3) Set up a study plan for the next test so that you feel better prepared.

Test-taking strategies

During the test:

- Review the entire test.
- Work on the easiest portions first.
- For essay questions, construct a short outline for yourself - then begin your answer with a summary sentence.
- For short-answer questions, answer only what is asked.
- For multiple-choice questions, read all of the options first, then eliminate the most obvious.
- Do not rush through the test. Wear a watch and check it frequently as you pace yourself.
- Counter negative thoughts, with more valid thoughts like, "I don't have to be perfect."
- Focus on answering the question, not on your grade or others' performances.
- If allowed, get a drink or go to the bathroom.
- Think for a moment about the post-exam reward you promised yourself.

After the test:

- Whether you did well or not, be sure to follow through on the reward you promised yourself - and enjoy it!
- Try not to dwell on all the mistakes you might have made.
- Do not immediately begin studying for the next test... indulge in something relaxing for a little while.

When anxiety keeps you up at night

Adequate rest is essential to studying and good test performance, and lack of sleep interferes with concentration and memory.



- Establish a relaxing bedtime routine.
- Make the bedroom a study-free zone.
- Keep a notepad on your nightstand.
- Practice deep breathing.

When procrastination is a habit

Do you tend to put things off until the last minute? Procrastinators tend to have more trouble with test anxiety than people who study regularly over time.

- Set a timer to make yourself study until the timer goes off.
- Use a calendar to make a schedule for yourself to plan to study everyday.
- Start the day with a list of things to do. Use your calendar to plan study times. Make the list right before going to bed.

This resource was adapted from:

<http://www.testprepreview.com/how-to-tell-if-you-have-test-anxiety.htm>

<http://www.counselingcenter.illinois.edu/self-help-brochures/academic-difficulties/test-anxiety/>

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For more information, call Assessment and Counseling Department at 735-5583 or email gcc.counseling@guamcc.edu

When anxiety upsets your stomach

- Stay away from alcohol.
- Avoid excess caffeine.
- Consider an antacid.
- Brew some herbal tea.

