



*Clearfield Campus
Student Learning Resource Center*

Overcoming Test Anxiety

Research shows that a small amount of anxiety may be beneficial because it sharpens the senses and the mind and test anxiety is fairly common in college students and **never** fatal. However, in large amounts test anxiety may be overwhelming and cause discomforting physical symptoms.

Test anxiety is actually a type of **performance anxiety** — a feeling someone might have in a situation where performance really counts or when the pressure's on to do well.

Test Preparation:

1. Create and **use a study schedule**- begin studying from the first day of class. You have to make enough time to prepare for a test.
2. **Self-test** to discover what has and has not yet been learned before taking a test.
3. **Ask** faculty what types of questions will be on an exam; (multiple-choice, true-false, essay, etc) and how many questions there might be.
4. **Rework the problems** you did for homework assignments. The more problems and how often you work on them, the more skill and confidence you acquire.
5. **Do not cram.** It is a known fact that the brain needs time to absorb new material so if you spread out your studying over time, you will retain more information.
6. **Eat well** and sensibly. Your body is like an engine that must have the proper materials. Proper nutrition will help your brain to think, concentrate, learn and recall properly.
7. **Sleep, sleep and more sleep.** Get at least 7-9 hours per night.

Mental and Physical Preparation:

1. Make the conscious decision to have a **positive attitude**. Visualize yourself doing well. Tell yourself to calm down, and relax, try to put a smile on your face and in your mind. Remember that it's your belief system that controls your behavior
2. If you start to panic- give yourself a **reality check**. This is not a life and death situation. This one test is not the difference between successful or unsuccessful people.
3. Arrive to your exam at least 10 minutes **early**. This allows time for deep breathing and relaxation.
4. **Read** the whole exam before you actually start writing. If you don't know a question, mark in the margin and come back to it later. Answer all the problems/questions that you are sure of first- (increases confidence).
5. Always go with your **first instincts**. If in doubt, leave it. Don't second guess yourself.
6. Work **carefully** and at a good pace for you.
7. **Think positively**. "I can do this" is always a good one to practice.
8. **Focus** on staying relaxed by breathing deeply and regularly, keep that heart rate down.

If test anxiety persists in spite of your efforts to control it, see Dr. Clay Kleckley or Professor Heather Fowler