

Reducing Test Anxiety

Exercises and Tips

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What is Test Anxiety? It's excessive worrying about upcoming exams and even fear of being evaluated. When thinking about the exam you might not know you're clenching your muscles. This tension can give you headaches, nausea and you might start feel so overwhelmed during the exam that you can't concentrate. These strategies are meant to help you relax and re-concentrate when you are worrying about your exams.

Exercise 1 – Relaxing Your Muscles

This first technique can be used when you're writing an exam or anytime you have a few minutes to sit down.

Step 1: Close your eyes. Tense every muscle in your body, starting with the neck and moving down to the shoulders, arms, stomach, legs, and feet. Inhale as each muscle is contracted, and hold your breath for a few seconds; then slowly exhale and release.

Step 2: Close your eyes tight and clench your teeth; feel the pressure mount. Hold for 5 seconds. Open your eyes and relax.



Repeat right after if your body is still feeling tense. Try this at anytime before or during the exam to relax your body and refocus.

Exercise 2: Controlling Your Breathing

Step 1: Sit with your back straight and your hands resting comfortably in your lap. To help block out distraction, try closing your eyes.

Step 2: Inhale slowly, smoothly and deeply through your nose for 5 seconds. Hold your breath in your lungs for 5 seconds. Slowly exhale through your mouth for 5 seconds. As you exhale, try to let go of all your anxiety, tension & stress. Pause for 5 seconds before repeating.

Do 10-12 rounds, which will only take 3-4 minutes. You can use this whenever you feel anxious. You can use it anywhere; on a bus, in a line, before and during a test.

Exercise 3: Taking a Break

When you're stressed you can't think clearly. That's the time when you lose concentration and make mistakes. If you're at home and you're too stressed try getting a glass of water, go watch TV for a little bit or check your email. If you're at school, go to the bathroom and splash some water on your face. This will give your brain a chance to think about something else so you can re-concentrate when you get back to studying or taking the test.

If you're at home and have the chance, it's a great idea to do something physical. If you go for a jog or lift some weights you'll start to burn off that excess stress energy that you have built up.

Without even realizing it you'll begin to cool down and relax to the point where your body and mind feel much better.



Reducing Test Anxiety Tips

- 1. Relax your body with the muscles and breathing exercises**
- 2. Focus on yourself and not other students**
- 3. Think positively and reward yourself everyday**
- 4. Exercise or do something fun to burn off extra energy**
- 5. Get a good night's sleep, all-nighters don't help**

Study Tips

While you are studying...

Budget your time - Estimate how long it will take to complete each of your activities (reading a chapter, making flash cards, reorganizing class notes). Make up a schedule and stick to it.

Space test reviews - Break exam preparation into manageable amounts of time to avoid boredom and loss of concentration. Mix up activities (outlining, reviewing, etc.). Studying for six half-hour sessions is much more effective than studying for three straight hrs.

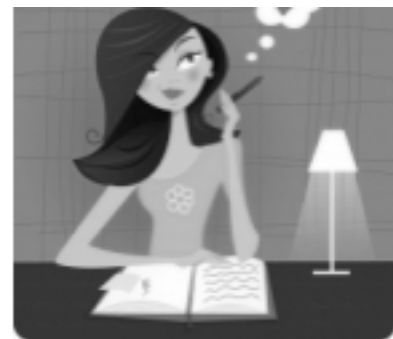
Take breaks – Everyone needs to take breaks during a study session. Take time to get a snack or watch TV for a little while every 30 min.

Attention and Concentration - To keep attention, study in a room that doesn't have many distractions. If you're studying on the computer, there's a good chance you'll be on Facebook a lot. To help concentration, choose a quiet environment with comfortable seats.

The actual material...

Reduce and organize information – No students are able to remember everything in their notes and books. Spend time reducing the information to major ideas, key words, and key phrases.

Word from general to specific - Review the main ideas in general terms first. Be sure to understand how the major topics are related. Then focus on the details for each major idea.



Recopying and reorganizing notes - It helps you identify main points and supporting details discussed in class. It gives you more chances for reviewing the test material.

Memorization Strategies

Paraphrase the information - Restating the information from your notes into your own words. It is easier to remember your own words than someone else's.

Focus on key words - When learning definitions of vocabulary terms or explanations of concepts, identify and memorize the key words only.

Memory Techniques

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|--------------------|---|
| Association | Associate the new information with prior knowledge and experiences |
| Rehearsal | Go over the information repeatedly, reciting aloud or taking notes |
| Relevance | Consider how the information is related to personal beliefs and experiences or to other aspects of the course |
| Mnemonics | Use abbreviated words or phrases to remember lists of information |

Test and retest yourself, working alone or with classmates. The most proven way to study for exams is practice tests. The sample questions allow you to see how you're doing before the exam. Ask your teachers for old exams if it's possible.

