



Tackling Test Anxiety

Test Anxiety is a combination of **physical symptoms and emotional reactions** that interfere with your ability to prepare for and perform well on tests.

Symptoms include:

- nausea, sweat, racing heart
- worry, depression, stress
- difficulty focusing and learning
- study procrastination and avoidance



Remember Your ONE and ONLY GOAL during a test:

Demonstrate your knowledge as clearly as possible in the amount of time provided.

The following are NOT your goals during a test:

- To perform perfectly
- To do better than others
- To get into graduate school
- To make your family proud

Or anything else you can't control in the moment!

Tips for Tackling Test Anxiety



STUDY WELL!

Start early and use active study strategies.
Re-reading lecture notes or a textbook is NOT enough.

IMMEDIATELY BEFORE THE TEST

- ✓ Eat something nutritious to help with focus and attention. Bring water to stay hydrated.
- ✓ Exercise will also help with focus and attention.
- ✓ Play calming or familiar music to help you relax.
- ✓ Arrive to test early enough to find a seat that will help, not hinder your focus (up front? near a window?)
- ✓ Avoid talking to classmates if it raises your anxiety.
- ✓ Bring ear plugs if you get distracted by noise

DURING THE TEST

Calm Your Body

- Breathe deeply from your belly
- Tighten various muscle groups, and then relax them
- Stand and stretch or shrug shoulders
- Close your eyes and count to ten

Calm Your Emotions and Thoughts

- **Focus only on present moment to help you stay grounded**
 - EX: "I am sitting at a desk in Carroll Hall. It is 2:00 pm on Tuesday."
- **Avoid thoughts about the future or past**
 - EX: "I need an A on this test in order to improve my g.p.a."
 - EX: "I should have done more practice problems."
- **Replace negative thoughts with positive ones**
 - "It's okay if I can't answer this question – I can answer another question instead."

For further reading
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