

Test Anxiety

Test anxiety is an issue that many students face at one time or another. It is important to learn to recognize test anxiety and learn how to deal with the anxiety more effectively. Anxiety is a normal human feeling that is part of life and often serves as a form of adrenaline (e.g., butterflies before making a speech or performing on stage). The anxiety can help by providing alertness and readiness, however, excessive anxiety can result in stress and hinder one's performance (e.g. Test Anxiety!!!).

Symptoms of Test Anxiety

- Fear of failing before arriving to take the exam.
- Feeling tension as exam is being passed out.
- Physical symptoms such as: increased heart rate, shortness of breath, perspiring, etc.
- Negative thinking such as: "I am going to fail", "I am dumb", "I shouldn't even bother taking the exam".
- "Blanking out" on information that you studied.
- Recalling information, upon leaving the class room or a short period later, that you "blanked out on" during the exam.
- Frustrated with your grade on the exam because you know you were well prepared.

Tips for Reducing Test Anxiety

- Prepare for the exam ahead of time. "Cramming" is a big culprit of test anxiety.
- Get plenty of rest and sleep the night before the exam.
- Don't forget to eat the day of the exam, preferably something nutritious.
- Avoid arriving too early or late to the exam.
- Avoid last minute studying; remember you are already prepared.
- Avoid listening to others or discussing the exam with others, while you waiting for the exam. The anxiety of others can "rub off" and suddenly you begin to doubt yourself.
- Don't forget to breath! Take deep breaths to help you relax, don't worry nobody will notice!!
- While you are taking deep breaths, replace any negative thoughts with positive thoughts. For example, you may find it useful to repeat positive statements to yourself such as the following: " I am relaxed", "I am prepared", "I am a good student". Make up your own!
- Don't get bogged down and worry about questions you don't know, move on. Later, the answer may come to you or you may get clues from other exam questions.
- Reward yourself when you are finished with the exam.