

OVERCOMING TEST ANXIETY

ANXIETY - REDUCING EXERCISES:

1. Massage your tense spots - neck, shoulders, fingers, forehead, etc.
2. Do several deep breathing exercises. Breathe in through your nose while counting slowly to 4, breathe out through your mouth softly while counting to 8. If you get light-headed or dizzy, you are breathing too fast.

PREPARING YOURSELF FOR TESTING:

1. A little worry is good for you, but concentrate on feeling confident about what you know.
2. Be comfortable. Wear comfortable clothing and shoes and make yourself comfortable in your chair. Do not slouch; it affects your attitude and alertness.
3. Try to do something that will make you feel happy before a test - give yourself a treat.
4. If you're worried about forgetting something specific, write it down on a corner of the test as soon as you get the test.

TAKING THE TEST:

1. Skim the test first. See what kind of test it is and which parts have the most points. Plan to spend the most time on those questions.
2. Go through the test and do the easy questions first. This will help to get your memory in gear, calm you down, and give you some confidence.
3. If you are spending too much time on one problem, put a mark by it so you can find it later, and go on. If you have time later, go back to it.
4. Read all directions and questions carefully. Underline key words or parts that look tricky. (For example: show all calculations, or blacken in the correct square.)
5. Try to reason out tough questions:
 - Look for clues in the question.
 - Look for clues in the answer choices, if multiple choice.
 - Keep your eyes open for memory joggers.
 - Watch for units of measure.
 - Use a diagram or graph to help you make sense of the problem.
 - Try to estimate the answer before doing the problem; then check your estimate when you finish.
 - If all else fails, make an educated guess.

HANDLING BLACKOUT:

If the unthinkable happens and your mind goes completely blank, you can get back in control. Put the test aside; shut your eyes; and breathe several long slow controlled breaths. Feel yourself slowing yourself down. Feel your composure return. Go back to the test and go on until you can find a question you can answer.

WHEN THE TEST IS OVER:

It's over. You did your best. Relax.

Excerpted from: Test Taking Strategies by Judi Kesselman-Kurkel and Franklynn Peterson
Test Without Trauma by Bette Erwin and Elza Dinwiddie