Math Anxiety

What is it?
How can students overcome it?
Do you have math anxiety?

- Do your hands sweat when you take math tests?

- Are you able to explain all the math concepts to your study group but get the lowest scores on the exams?

- Does your mind go blank during tests when working on problems you have completed successfully in the past?
Math Anxiety Facts

Where does math anxiety come from?

- Past negative experiences with math
- Stress
- Personal problems
Math Anxiety Facts

WHAT IS MATH ANXIETY? Math anxiety is a learned emotional response to one or more of the following:

- taking a math class
- listening to a math lecture
- working on math problems
- discussing mathematics
Math Anxiety Facts

What are the symptoms of math anxiety?

- **Fear and Panic** – Students feel defeated and scared.

- **Paranoia** – Students have the feeling that everyone knows the answers and processes except them.

- **Underconfidence** – Many students believe that they are not capable of learning math or that they were not born with a “math mind”.

Finding Solutions

The Math Diary

- Write down your first math memories
- Recall positive math experiences
- Identify the onset of math phobia
- Create a more realistic view of your math ability
Practice Tests

- Proven to be effective
- Should be taken in test-like conditions
- Reduce stress through continued practice
- Practice makes taking tests easier
- Subsequent test-taking should produce less anxiety
Relaxation Techniques

- Controlled breathing

- Muscle relaxation

- Visualization
Negative Self-Talk

- Negative thoughts trigger math anxiety.

- Positive thoughts unlock ability.

- Overcoming math anxiety requires changing behaviors and attitudes.
Being Prepared

- Get a good night’s sleep the night before the exam.
- Arrive a little early.
- Eat a good breakfast or meal at the appropriate time before the test.
- Wear comfortable clothes.
- Have all necessary materials, such as pencils, pens, calculators, etc.
- Survey the test to determine its scope and difficulty.
- Answer easy questions first.
Strategies for Defeating Math Anxiety

- Remember that many other people fear math too.
- Use a math diary to find out the origin of your math anxiety.
- Be aware of and stop negative self-talk.
- Become aware of your math strengths.
- Surround yourself with positive, supporting individuals.
- Complete all assignments.
- Have the courage to ask questions in class.
More Strategies for Defeating Math Anxiety

- Brush up on basic math. Use the Learning Center or ask a knowledgeable friend.
- Study in an appropriate environment.
- Form a study group composed of a few serious students.
- Take study breaks.
- Use relaxation techniques to relieve stress.
- Recall all math successes. Congratulate yourself!
Math Anxiety Websites

- [http://www.albion.edu/asc/QSC/math_anxiety.asp](http://www.albion.edu/asc/QSC/math_anxiety.asp)
- [http://www.math.com/students/advice/anxiety.html](http://www.math.com/students/advice/anxiety.html)
- [http://www.mathpower.com/anxtest.htm](http://www.mathpower.com/anxtest.htm)
- [http://www.oncourseworkshop.com/Emotions006.htm](http://www.oncourseworkshop.com/Emotions006.htm)
References
