How to Overcome Test Anxiety

Here are some helpful tips to minimize anxiety before and during a test.

Choose new behaviors: Help the anxiety-producing chemicals to recede. Here’s how:

1. *Prepare thoroughly*, and then prepare some more. Confidence gained through extensive preparation diminishes anxiety.

2. *Relax*, slow down and reclaim mastery of your thoughts and emotions.


4. *Bring a piece of home to the tests*, like a family photo or good luck charm.

Choose new thoughts: Changing our thoughts can soothe irrational anxieties. Here’s how:

1. *Detach*. Once you have prepared fully for the test, there is nothing more you can do. Worrying won’t help. So do everything you can do in the time you have to prepare, then trust the outcome to take care of itself.

2. *Reframe*. It is just a test. You'll have lots of them in your academic career. You can live with the results and make adjustments in your preparation for the next test.

3. *Visualize success*. Create a mental movie of yourself achieving your ideal outcomes. Play the movie over and over again until the picture of your success becomes stronger than your fear.

4. *Assume the best*. Victims often create more anxiety through negative assumptions.

5. *Face the fear*. Do what you fear, in spite of the fear. You will realize that your FEAR is just a False Expectation Appearing Real.

6. *Say your affirmation*. Create a positive affirmation and keep on saying it to yourself.
Healthy Stress Reduction

Choose new behaviors: Here are some self-management actions you can take when you feel that your life is stretched a mile wide and an inch thin.

1. Separate from an external stressor. Choose to study in a quiet place.

2. List and prioritize everything you need to do. Use a next actions list, record all of your incomplete tasks, and assign priorities to each task: A = Important & Urgent actions, B = Important & Not Urgent actions, C = All Unimportant actions.
   - Delete “C”s. Identify where you are wasting time and cross them off your list.
   - Delegate “A”s and “B”s. Where possible, get another person to complete some of your important tasks. This choice frees up time to do the tasks that only you can do.
   - Complete the remaining “A”s and “B”s yourself. Start with you’re A priorities and handle them immediately. Spend time doing only A and B priorities and watch your overwhelm subside.

3. Discover time-savers. Consciously make better use of your time.

4. Eliminate time-wasters. Identify and eliminate time-wasting activities.

5. Say “no”. Admit that your plate is full, and politely refuse requests that add to your commitments. If saying “no” is difficult for you, do role-plays with a friend to practice. Or put it in writing.

6. Keep your finances organized. A survey of 11,000 adults by Prevention magazine revealed that their number one source of stress is worry over personal finances. So curtail unnecessary spending, pay bills when due, balance your checkbook.

7. Exercise. Aerobic exercise increases the blood levels of endorphins, and these hormones block pain, create a feeling of euphoria (the exercise high), and reduce stress.

8. Get enough sleep. If sleep is a problem, don’t eat after 7 o’clock and go to bed by 10. If thoughts keep running through your mind, write them down. Breathe deeply and relax. Clear your mind. If sleep eludes you, consider seeing a doctor. You can’t learn effectively when deprived of sleep.
Choose new thoughts: Because we create the inner experience of feeling overwhelmed in our mind, we can un-create it. Here’s how.

1. Elevate. See each problem in the bigger picture of your whole life. Notice how little importance it really has. From this new perspective, ask, “Will this problem really matter one year from now?” Often the answer is “no”.

2. Trust a positive outcome. How many times have you been upset by something that later turned out to be a blessing in disguise? Because it’s possible, expect the blessing.

3. Take a mental vacation. Picture a place you love and spend a few minutes visiting it in your mind. Enjoy the peace and rejuvenation of this mini-vacation.