Test Anxiety

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What is Test Anxiety?

Test anxiety is defined as a state of uneasiness and distress before and during a test that often lowers performance.
Test Anxiety is **NOT**...

causéd by not studying, not studying effectively or not being prepared.
Symptoms of Test Anxiety

- Physical symptoms can include:
  - Sweating
  - Shaking
  - Rapid heart beat
  - Dry mouth
  - Fainting
  - Nausea
  - “Butterflies" in the stomach
  - Physical illness
Symptoms of Test Anxiety

- Cognitive and behavioral symptoms can include:
  - Fidgeting
  - Avoidance
  - Substance abuse – using "downers" such as prescription medications and alcohol
  - “Blanking" out answers to the test, even though you know the information
  - Negative self-talk
  - Trouble concentrating
  - Racing thoughts
Symptoms of Test Anxiety

- Emotional symptoms can include:
  - Depression
  - Low self-esteem
  - Anger
  - Hopelessness
  - Helplessness
  - Frustration
  - Fear
**Tips to Reduce Test Anxiety**

- **Prepare systematically.**
  - Study and practice the material that will be on the test.
  - Develop a consistent pre-test routine, as possible.
  - Use study groups or involve others in your study sessions.

- **Talk to your instructor.**
  - Make sure you understand what’s going to be on the test.
  - Let your instructor know that you feel anxious when you take tests, he or she may have suggestions and other resources to help you succeed.

- **Learn relaxation techniques.**
  - Deep-breathing exercises
  - Visualization

- **Eat before the exam.**
- **Get plenty of sleep.**
More Tips

- Don't ignore a learning disability.
  - Find out if there is an underlying condition that interferes with the ability to learn, focus or concentrate, for example, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) or dyslexia.
  - A student diagnosed with a learning disability has a right to adjustments to help with test taking, such as extra time to complete a test or having questions read aloud.

- Stay hydrated.
  - Drink plenty of water.
  - Avoid sugary drinks: soda, they can cause your blood sugar to peak and then drop.
  - Avoid caffeinated beverages: energy drinks or coffee, they can cause or increase anxiety.

- Get some exercise.
  - Regular aerobic exercise, and exercising on exam day, can release tension.
Ways to Beat Test Anxiety During the Test

- Read all directions carefully
- Stay focused
- Take deep breaths
- Stay positive
- Stay relaxed
  - Change positions during the exam to help relax and/or regain focus
- Don’t cram right before the test starts - it will cause unnecessary anxiety
- Be prepared for the test, with pen/paper/ calculator etc.
More Ways...

- On multiple choice questions, read all answers before making a selection
- If you go blank, skip the question and go back
- If it is an essay exam pick one question and start writing, it may help trigger your responses for other questions
- Don’t watch the time
- Don’t worry about when others finish
Remember

Test anxiety is VERY COMMON.

You are NOT alone, if you suffer from it.
Special Services for Students

For More Information
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