

## **Test Anxiety Tips—[http://www.coedu.usf.edu/zalaquett/Help\\_Screens/Test\\_AnxietyMHS.htm](http://www.coedu.usf.edu/zalaquett/Help_Screens/Test_AnxietyMHS.htm)**

If you have studied appropriately for your test and you are still overreacting or panicking, you are suffering from test anxiety. Check out these steps that can help you overcome its effects. These steps are:

- Before the test
- Thinking straight about your test
- Taking care of your basic needs
- Getting ready
- Facing the test
- During the test
- After the test

### **BEFORE THE TEST**

- BE PREPARED
- NO CRAMMING
- REVIEW ALL THE INFORMATION
- ASK YOURSELF QUESTIONS
- USE FLASH CARDS

### **THINKING STRAIGHT ABOUT YOUR TEST**

- CHANGE THE WAY YOU THINK ABOUT STUDYING
- PUT YOUR TEST IN PERSPECTIVE
- ELIMINATE NEGATIVE SELF-TALK
- INVEST TIME IN PLANNING
- PUT YOUR GRADE IN PERSPECTIVE
- DEVELOP REASONABLE EXPECTATIONS: Take your tests one at a time. Set reachable goals.

### **TAKING CARE OF YOUR BASIC NEEDS**

- KEEP IN MIND THAT YOU ARE MORE THAN A TEST TAKER. Students concerned about tests usually neglect other aspects of themselves. Do not forget that taking a test is only one of the important things in your life.
- SMALL DOSES PLEASE. Study for short periods of time (10-15 minute bursts and build from there).
- REST THE NIGHT BEFORE THE TEST. A refreshed mind will allow you to do your best.

### **GETTING READY**

- FACE THE DAY OF THE TEST WITH PRIDE. Take responsibility for your actions. If you studied enough, be proud of yourself.
- EAT A SENSIBLE BREAKFAST.
- RELAX DURING THE HOUR BEFORE THE TEST. Do something relaxing the hour before the test. It is too late to try to learn what you did not learn before.
- AVOID "STRESS-CARRIERS." Politely avoid classmates who produce anxiety and affect your mood to the test. Do not let them scare, stress, or upset you.
- USE PHYSICAL RELAXATION. Learn and use tensing and relaxing techniques to fight off the tension and anxiety.

### **FACING THE TEST**

- HOW DO YOU FEEL? How are you? How is your anxiety level? If it is high or moderately high, take some time to relax. COACH YOURSELF. Sometimes students get anxious after finding out that they do not know the answer to the first or second question.  
*Follow your plan:*
  - Answer the questions you know.
  - Answer the questions you are not really sure about, and finally
  - Answer the questions you do not know
  - This process will help you to keep moving. Stick to the plan!!
- REVIEW YOUR TEST. Before you begin answering the questions, review the entire test. Read the instructions carefully; twice if necessary. Stick to your plan, begin working on the easiest questions first.

## **DURING THE TEST**

- **OUTLINE ANSWERS ON ESSAY QUESTIONS.** Develop a short outline of your answers for essay questions. This will help you to organize your answer, avoid irritating repetitions, and skip circular arguments.
- **GIVE SHORT ANSWERS FOR SHORT-ANSWER QUESTIONS.** Answer short and to the point. Use specific terms and ideas. If you cannot remember a technical term, describe it in your own words.
- **READ OPTIONS CAREFULLY.** Read all the options of multiple choice questions. Eliminate the most obvious.
- **WEAR YOUR WATCH.** Do not rush through the test. Keep track of the time. Pace yourself. If you are running out of time, concentrate on those questions which you can answer.
- **DO NOT GET STUCK.** Do not get stuck on one question. Skip it and solve the next one. Go back to the question after you finish answering those you can. Remember that you do not get points for trying.
- **ASK QUESTIONS.** Ask for more information if you are not sure about a question in your test. Asking your instructor a question can also help to distract you and reduce your anxiety.
- **TALK TO YOURSELF.** If your anxiety continues, tell yourself phrases like "I can be anxious later, now I am going to continue my test." Use any type of internal dialogue (nobody else need to hear you) that can help you do better in your test.
- **IF WORSE COME TO WORSE, USE ANY OTHER LEGAL TRICK TO DISTRACT YOURSELF.** If anxiety continues, use any acceptable way to distract yourself from it. Request permission to go to the bathroom or get a drink, etc. If nothing else works, go sharpen your pencil!

## **AFTER THE TEST**

- **REWARD YOURSELF.** Whether you did well or not, reward yourself for taking, and surviving your test! You deserve it.
- **LATER ON.** Evaluate your study plan. Here are some questions to ask yourself:
  - *Were you prepared for it?*
  - *Were you able to control your anxiety and relax?*
  - *What did you do right? (You should repeat this while studying for the next test.)*
  - *What did you do that needs work? (Try to work on it, but do not dwell on your mistakes!!).*
- Finally, use your mistakes as a guide. Mistakes make it easier to figure out what needs to be improved.
- **THEN...** Develop an improved plan and begin studying for your next test!

The Help Screens (HS) & the Counseling Center Help Screens (CCHS) were created by Carlos P. Zalaquett, Ph.D.