

## What is Assessment Anxiety?

Test anxiety is basically a fear of taking tests. When faced with taking an exam, students with test anxiety experience overwhelming feelings of worry and fear. Before and during the exam, they may be unable to concentrate, find themselves easily distracted, and experience physical symptoms such as sweating, shaking, headache, pounding heart, or queasiness. Sometimes students forget or “block out” all of the material they have studied. A student with test anxiety may do poorly on an exam, even though he or she may know the material very well.



## Where Can I Get More Help?

Test anxiety can hinder your ability to demonstrate what you have actually learned in a class. Be sure to let your teachers know (in advance) if you believe your performance is negatively impacted by anxiety, and talk over any suggestions the instructor offers. Significant anxiety may warrant accommodations (such as extended time, an alternate setting for test taking). Your teachers are always willing to help you. Talk to them!



### Websites Used:

- [http://www.wvup.edu/academics/more\\_test\\_anxiety\\_tips.htm](http://www.wvup.edu/academics/more_test_anxiety_tips.htm)
- [http://oregonstate.edu/counsel/sites/default/files/Test\\_Anxiety\\_Brochure.pdf](http://oregonstate.edu/counsel/sites/default/files/Test_Anxiety_Brochure.pdf)
- <http://www.how-to-study.com/study-skills/en/43.asp>
- <http://petsoc.wordpress.com/academic/how-to-study-effectively-for-optimum-performance-in-2009/>
- <http://curepanicattacks2.com/curepanicattacks/can-breathing-cure-panic-attacks>
- <http://www.arthursclipart.org/children/boyscol1.htm>
- [http://www.luther.edu/counseling/self\\_help/anxiety/](http://www.luther.edu/counseling/self_help/anxiety/)



# Assessment Anxiety



**Informational brochure for students with test anxiety**

## What Causes Assessment Anxiety?

While most students experience some anxiety when taking an exam, students with test anxiety view tests as threats.



This may be a result of past experiences of “failure,” overly high expectations, or outside pressures to do well. Sometimes a pattern is set up: the more a student “fails” at taking exams, the worse the test anxiety becomes.

Poor study habits, poor test-taking strategies, and lack of self-confidence can cause test anxiety. Students with test anxiety often do not believe in their own abilities. Students with test anxiety often think that their entire future depends on their performance on a test. This belief leads to intense worrying that they will fail this test and therefore will have no chances for future success.

# What Can I Do About Assessment Anxiety?

Effective control of test anxiety involves working on several aspects.

## 1) Examine your attitudes toward testing.

- Think about why you become anxious when taking a test.
- Learn to set realistic expectations for yourself that are neither too high nor too low.
- Identify negative or self-defeating thinking that undermines your confidence in yourself. E.g. "I'm going to bomb this test."
- Use logic to replace negative thinking with more positive, realistic thoughts such as "I have a lot of material to learn but I will stick to my schedule and concentrate."
- If you need help, seek a trained professional counselor.



## 2) Learn productive studying techniques.

- Study in the same place all the time where you will not be interrupted.
- Develop a study schedule. Several short review sessions are more effective than a single long one.
- Go to school.
- Take efficient notes in a notebook. Read over

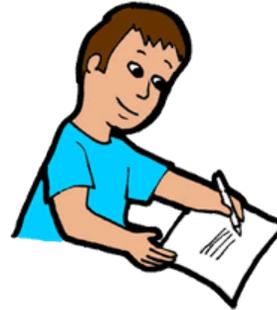


your notes the same day. Keep notes organized and legible.

- Ask teachers for extra help.
- Read textbooks effectively. Underline and review important points that are likely to be tested.
- Get a good night's sleep the night before the assessment. Staying up late and cramming leads to fatigue, poor retention of the material, and reduced concentration, all of which contribute to anxiety.

## 3) Learn good test-taking skills.

- Always read and understand the exam directions.



*For essay exams:*

- Read all the questions first.
- Underline key words indicating how the question should be answered such as "compare and contrast," "analyze," "describe," or "discuss". Be sure to answer the question in the manner asked for.
- Jot down your initial thoughts and ideas about all questions before you begin writing your answers.
- Make a simple outline before answering each question. This helps you to prevent "blocking out" the material, and keeps you organized.
- Answer the easiest question first so you can "warm up" to the test.



*For short-answer exams:*

- Read all the questions first.
- Budget your time by spending more time on questions that are worth more points.
- Answer the easiest questions first, but answer all the questions. A partial answer may be worth a few points.
- Use the full time allowed. Review your answers and make corrections, if needed.



*For objective exams (multiple choice, true-false, or matching)*

- Read the questions in order. Answers to earlier questions often provide clues to later questions.
- Leave tough questions for later. When you have gone through the entire test once, re-read the tough ones. Make an educated guess of the correct answer.
- Look for key words such as "always" and "never." Select the answer that is the most correct.
- Read carefully. Objective exam questions can be tricky!



## 4) Learn to relax.

- Practice a relaxation technique that suits you.
- If you feel tense during an exam, close your eyes and breathe deeply several times. Return to the exam.
- Put your feet flat on the floor. With your hands, grab underneath the chair. Push down with