

Overcoming Test Stress



Most students experience some level of anxiety during an exam or test.

Review your personal skills and situation. Guidance counsellors can help you in these areas as well. Let your teacher know in advance if you are worried and if you have accommodations

Test Preparation:

- **Expect some anxiety.** It's a reminder that you want to do your best and can provide energy. Keep stress manageable.
- **Sleep hygiene.** Arrive well rested and fed.
- **Know the date, time and location of the test.**
Arrive early. Make sure you understand as much as possible about what will be on the test.
- **Avoid discussion of content with others on the day of the test.** This could cause stress.
- **Positive affirmations—** Try "I have done this, I can do this again" or "I have all the knowledge I need to get this done."
- **Take deep breaths** as you enter the examination room and before you are given the test.

During the test:

- **Visualization.** Close your eyes and see yourself writing the test and answering the questions correctly. 
- **Read the entire test** over and decide on an approach. Look at the time and determine how much time you will spend on each section.
- **Start** with the easiest questions.
- **Monitor physical signs of tension.** If needed, stretch legs, arms and fingers during the test.
- **Focus on positive thoughts:**
 - Focus on yourself.** Don't think about what others are doing.
 - Focus on here and now.** Don't think about past mistakes.
 - Focus on what the test means.** The test evaluates your knowledge of a limited set of information at a certain point in your own personal history. Try not to generalize about the test.
- **Use allocated time** to complete the test. Review questions that were tricky. Leave no blanks.

After the Test:



- **Go over and review your test.** Mark questions to discuss with the teacher. Meet the teacher. It's important to know where you need to improve for the next test.
- **Form a study group** with students in your course.
- **Avoid cramming.** Time manage with taking the time to clean up your electronic files, your binder and your notes. Give yourself plenty of time to prepare.
- **Keep positive and supportive friends.** Having a network of peers helps when you need support and positive thinking to complete a test.

Think about next steps:



- **Realize that anxiety can be a 'habit'** and that it takes practice to use strategies as a tool to succeed.
- **List what worked.** Review these strategies.
- **List what didn't work** for improvement.
- **Celebrate** that you have decided to use strategies to support the stress and you are on the road to overcoming test stress
- **Reward yourself!** Give yourself something to look forward to after the test.

Adapted from: flamingcollege.ca/aes/resources/student-resources/

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