



Academic Advising & Support Office

Managing Test Anxiety

What Causes It

- Poor study skills
- Fear of the unknown
- Negative past experiences

How to Manage It

Leading Up to the Exam

- Organization and planning are key to managing test anxiety
 - Make sure you develop and maintain a regular study schedule
 - Stay on top of your assignments throughout the semester
 - Take notes as you read or listen to lecture
 - Talk to the professor and find out as much as you can about the format and content of the exam
 - Test anxiety is often a fear of the unknown, this will help you prepare and dispel those fears
 - Find out about the exam time and location and try and study there or in a similar location – research shows that studying where you are tested improves scores
 - Participate in review sessions

Right before the Exam

- Do not talk about the test or study at the last minute, hearing about others' concerns may cause more nerves
- If you find yourself feeling anxious, focus your thoughts on a small, unimportant detail leaving no room for your anxiety
- Stay positive!
 - Give yourself a pep talk
 - Visualize your success on the exam and how you are going to get there (I know the material, I know the format, I will use test-taking strategies, I will do well on this exam)
- Take care of yourself
 - Eat healthy food, get enough sleep, drink plenty of fluids
- Focus on taking slow, deep breathes in and out to calm anxious nerves

BRACE Yourself

- **B**reathe regularly and deeply
- **R**elax by trying to clear your mind of worries and concerns
- **A**ttitude – think positive and visualize your success
- **C**enter yourself – focus your mind, body, and materials on the task at hand
- **E**xpect a change – anticipate some surprises, but do not fixate on them

During the Exam

- Be realistic about what you know and do not get upset about what you do not
- Use test taking strategies (see *Strategies for During the Test Handout*)

After the Exam

- Remain positive, do not beat yourself up over the answers you did not know
- Go over the exam
 - This will give you a better idea of the professor's style for writing exams and the amount of detail he or she is looking for
 - Identify the areas of weakness so you know what to improve on to be able to understand upcoming material