



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

Support Operations for Academic Retention™

# Tackling Test Anxiety



## Anxiety Erasers:

### Test Prep:

- What's on your test?
- What's your study style?
- Ask the professor questions.

### Two Days Out:

- Buy supplies.
- Studying should be done.
- Get quality rest.
- Review with classmates.
- Practice mental affirmations.

### Day Before Test:

- No cramming!!!
- Early to bed.
- Gather things for the next day.
- Visualizations.
- Practice mental affirmations.

### Test Day:

- Be sure to eat.
- Scan the information, if you must.
- Try not to listen to classmates just before the test. Odds are they are confused and may confuse you too.
- Dress comfortably.
- Be on time.
- Practice breathing exercises.

Exploring methods to combat mental anxiety is just as important, if not more so, than studying the material. Try some of these to keep you from blowing your stack on test day:

### Professor meetings:

Asking questions about the test will help calm your fears. Who better to ask than the test's creator? You can also inform them of any anxiety issues you have had in the past. Instructors know of certain test taking difficulties and typically work reasonably well with students.

### Rest:

You would not push your body to perform major tasks after days of little sleep, don't ask your brain to do the same. After studying long periods of time, your brain needs to re-energize. Take short breaks while studying and be sure to get plenty of rest at night.

### Distractions:

Everything is good— in moderation. Focusing solely on the upcoming test may be the intuitive reaction. However, non-stop studying can lead to 'burn-out' which can be more detrimental than not studying at all. Be sure to take time to relax and let your mind do something it (and you) will enjoy. Movies, playing sports or even reading a fiction novel for pleasure can be good ways to take a mental health break. Don't forget though, all in moderation, especially the ever addictive Soduko.

### Have a plan....:

... and follow through. Set a schedule and stick to it. Making task lists help to keep concentration levels high as well as track success.

### Exercise:

Physical activity helps relieve stress. Plus, it gives you a boost in blood-flow to the brain! That means stamina and better mental function!

### Vent!:

If you are frustrated, tell someone! Odds are, they feel/have felt the same way. Verbalizing fears may just banish them completely.

### Breathing Exercises:

Practice controlling your breath. Taking deep breaths keeps your pulse down and regulates your heart-rate. If you are having anxiety related to an exam, you are likely to feel your pulse quicken. You have the ability to control it through calm, concentrated control of your breath.

### Visualizations:

Before taking an exam, imagine the feeling of receiving a good grade. Harness that sense of accomplishment and use it as confidence while studying and sitting for the test. Seeing the end in sight can keep the exam from becoming an insurmountable monster.

## It's all in your head.

"Mental affirmations" may sound like a bunch of "mumbo-jumbo", but it works. The attitude we have going into a task will directly effect the success we can achieve. Thinking negatively about your abilities and the exam will, no doubt, be reflected in the grade. Positive thoughts, when sincere, can be the

driving force to ace an 'impossible' test.

Remember, the exam is not new material; the professor gave you the information already. Now all you have to do is give the material back. You have spent weeks focusing on the information. Applying and recalling it

should be the easy part, show off! But, to do this, you have to have confidence in your abilities.

*"Whether you think you can, or think you can't— you are right."*

- Henry Ford