

TEST ANXIETY

HOW DO YOU FEEL?

These physical symptoms can cause a **fight-flight-freeze** response affecting your ability to think clearly.

- » Nausea
- » Stomach Ache
- » Shortness of Breath
- » Hyperventilation/Panic Attacks
- » Feel Faint
- » Rapid Heartbeat
- » Sweating Excessively
- » Dizziness/Light headedness

WHAT IS HAPPENING?

Mild stress can serve as a motivator and improve performance, attention, concentration, and memory, but test anxiety can lower your grades if you experience:

- » **your mind blanking/freezing up**
- » **having a hard time concentrating**
- » **racing thoughts**
- » **overthinking questions & concepts**
- » **second-guessing/changing answers**
- » **comparing yourself to others**

DURING THE TEST

- 1. Focus on the test**
don't get distracted by other students
- 2. Read directions carefully**
i.e., one/multiple answer options
- 3. Underline key words in the question**
identify what the question focuses on
- 4. Answer easy questions first**
leave more time to focus on difficult ones
- 5. Reason through harder questions**
don't overthink, use knowledge from lecture, textbook, etc.
- 6. Essay questions: write an outline FIRST**
helps to ensure the answer meets requirements
- 7. Try the 5-4-3-2-1 Grounding Technique**
If you feel exceptionally stressed during the test

GET GRADED ON YOUR ACADEMIC ABILITIES, NOT ON YOUR ANXIETY!

Test anxiety can be a symptom of social anxiety. If persistent visit your health care provider or the University Counseling Center

LIFE STYLE HACKS

Here are some important strategies to build resilience against stress:

EAT

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» Healthy and balanced meals, see USDA recommendations:

https://myplate-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/2022-01/SSwMP%20Mini-Poster_English_Final2022.pdf

SLEEP

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» 7-8 hours a night

» Get a good night's sleep before the test!

EXERCISE

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» Get your heart rate up for at least 15 minutes a day

» Check CDC guidelines:

<https://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/basics/adults/index.htm>

RELAX

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» Practice deep breathing (the more, the better)

» Do a progressive relaxation technique; flex and relax every muscle in your body starting with your feet (practice makes difference)

» Limit TV & social media time (screens are bad as escape, good as reward)

STUDY HACKS

PLAN & DON'T CRAM

» Follow syllabus planning

» Break down big assignments in smaller tasks

» Limit length of study sessions

(study 25 mins., take a 5 min., repeat 4X, then schedule longer break]

» Make the most of a study session

(quiet area, phone out of reach and in airplane mode, productive time of day)

STUDY WITH OTHERS

» To help with knowledge check and confidence

THINK POSITIVE

» Talk to yourself as you would to your best friend

» Replace negative thoughts with positive ones: try "I'm excited" instead of "I'm nervous" "I can figure it out" instead of "I cannot do it".