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
» Healthy and balanced meals, see USDA recommendations:

SLEEP
» 7-8 hours a night
» Get a good night’s sleep before the test!

EXERCISE
» 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
» 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”.

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