

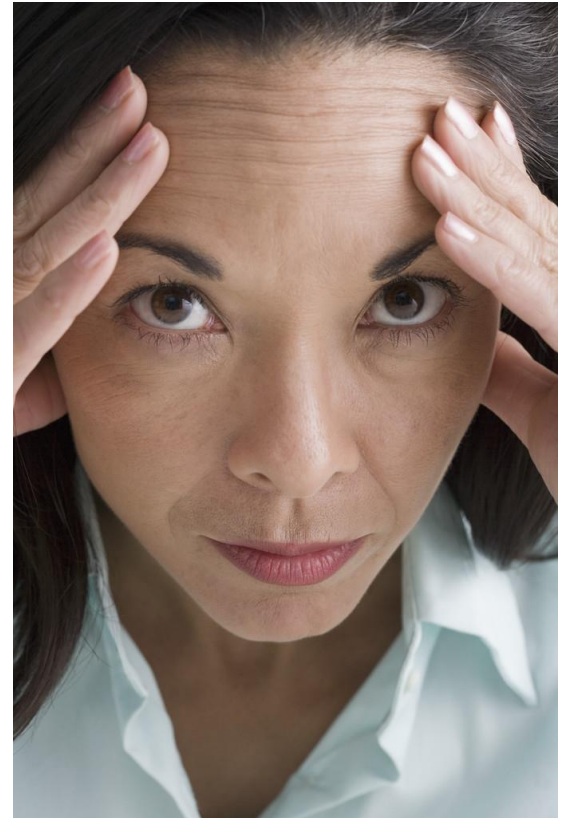
Overcoming Test Anxiety

“Worry is a thin stream of fear trickling through the mind. If encouraged, it cuts a channel into which all other thoughts are drained.”

- Arthur Somers Roche

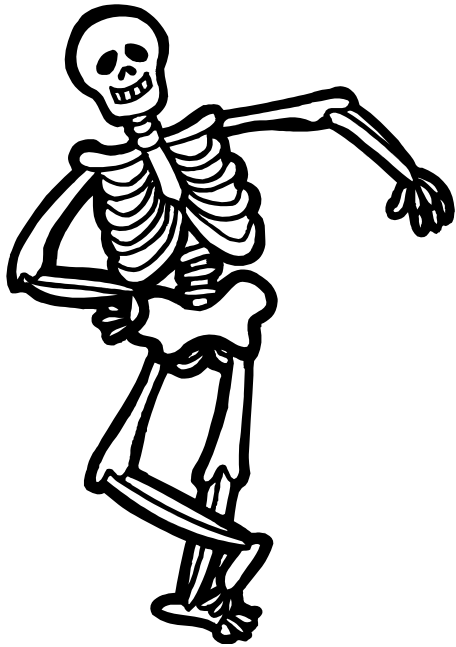
What is Test Anxiety?

- ▶ Beyond normal test “jitters”.
- ▶ Anxiety that interferes with a student’s ability to think logically or remember facts.
- ▶ Being distracted, upset and overwhelmed in anticipation of an exam and the results which might occur.
- ▶ A panicky feeling centered on immediate performance.



Test Anxiety Strikes Two Places

- ▶ In your body



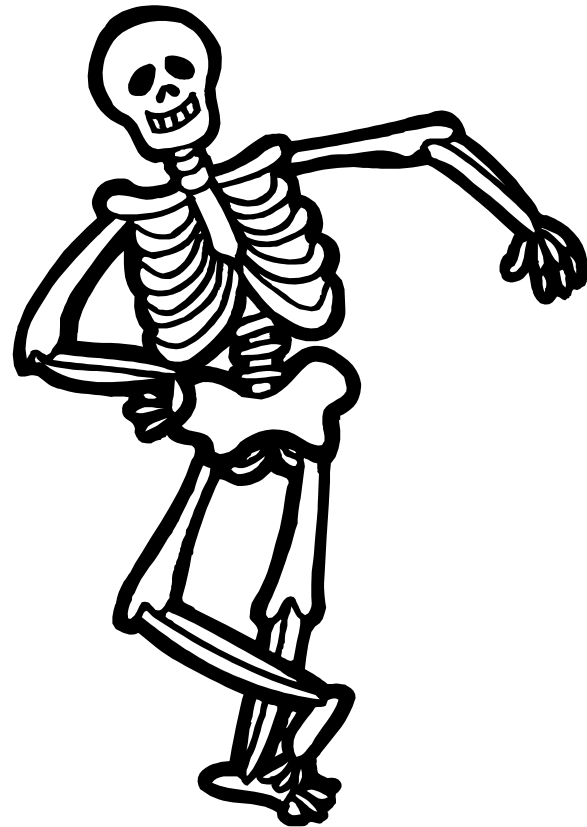
and

- ▶ In your head



Signs of Anxiety in Your Body

- ▶ Nausea
- ▶ Cramps
- ▶ Faintness
- ▶ Sweating
- ▶ Headache
- ▶ Dry mouth
- ▶ Increased Breathing Rate
- ▶ Fast Heartbeat
- ▶ Tense Muscles



Signs of Anxiety in Your Head

- ▶ Knowing the answers after the test, but not while taking it
- ▶ Mental blank-out
- ▶ Racing thoughts
- ▶ Difficulty concentrating
- ▶ Negative thoughts about:
 - Past performance
 - Consequences of failure
 - How everyone else is doing



You've participated in class, done all of your homework, studied hard, and you think you have a grip on the material. But then the day of the test comes. Suddenly, you blank out, freeze up, zone out, or feel so nervous that you can't get it together to respond to those questions you knew the answers to just last night.

Does this describe you?

If it does, then you may suffer from test anxiety.

Eight Myths of Test Anxiety

1. Students are born with test anxiety.
2. Test anxiety is a mental illness.
3. Test anxiety cannot be reduced.
4. Any level of test anxiety is bad.
5. Only unprepared students have anxiety.
6. Very intelligent students, or those in high-level courses, don't have test anxiety.
7. Attending all classes and completing all assignments will eliminate test anxiety.
8. Test anxiety will go away on its own.

Eight Truths about Test Anxiety

1. Test anxiety is a learned behavior.
2. The association of grades and personal worth causes test anxiety.
3. Test anxiety can be caused by a feeling of lack of control.
4. Being placed into a course above your ability can cause test anxiety.
5. Test anxiety can be caused by timed tests and the fear of not finishing the test.
6. Test anxiety can stem from poor preparation for the test.
7. Test anxiety can stem from poor information organizational skills.
8. Worrying about how you compare to others causes test anxiety.

Causes & Cures for Test Anxiety

1. You are unfamiliar with the test.



- ▶ Learn about the test
 - Number of questions
 - Type of questions
 - Time allotted for test
 - How answers are scored
 - Topics covered on the test
 - Look at sample questions.

Causes & Cures for Test Anxiety

2. You feel you haven't mastered the subject being tested.



- ▶ Make an organized study schedule and stick to it.
 - Use your resources (textbooks, class notes, instructor)
 - Understand terms & concepts
 - Eliminate time to procrastinate... it's not on your schedule!

Causes & Cures for Test Anxiety

3. You have negative thoughts...

- a) I always do poorly on tests.
- b) If I don't pass this test, I'm a failure.
- c) I won't be able to complete my degree program.

▶ Counter them with positive thoughts and actions.

- I have a better study plan than before.
- I'm going to pass, but if I don't, I can bounce back.
- I am working hard toward my degree and it will pay off.

Before, During & After the Test


Proven Methods to Reduce Test Anxiety

“Don’t worry. Worry is like shoveling smoke. You never get to the fire & you make it look a whole lot worse than it really is.” **Anonymous**

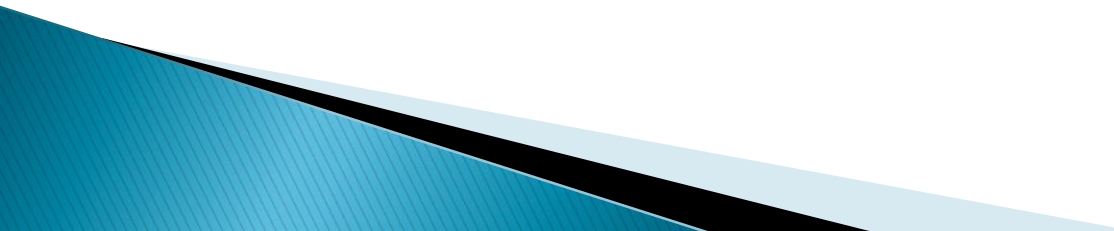
Before the Test

- ▶ Eliminate bad habits in study and thinking.
- ▶ Stop looking at the outcome as a whole.
- ▶ Practice positive self-talk.
- ▶ Practical assessment and positive initiative (find your stressor and work toward fixing it)
- ▶ Take care of your physical and mental health.
- ▶ Practice relaxation techniques –
 - ▶ <http://asrcseattle.com/downloads/managingphysicalsymptoms.pdf>
 - ▶ <http://asrcseattle.com/downloads/managingcognitivesymptoms.pdf>
- ▶ Avoid other anxious testers when studying!

During the Test

- ▶ Review the test and directions first and organize your time accordingly.
 - ▶ Use thought-stopping techniques to halt negative thinking. Mentally shout, “Stop!”
 - ▶ Put it in perspective. “An hour from now, I’ll be on the other side of this obstacle.”
 - ▶ Don’t rush. Use all the exam time to finish and check your work.
 - ▶ Never leave a question blank. Partial credit is better than no credit.
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After the Test – Before the Next

- ▶ Ask yourself these questions:
 - *Did the test reflect how I studied?*
 - *Did the test rely more on lecture notes or the text?*
 - *Were outside readings included on the test?*
 - ▶ Adjust your studying to the test format.
 - ▶ Talk to the instructor. Ask for suggestions.
 - ▶ Attend group study sessions if needed.
 - ▶ Learn some relaxation techniques to use before and during the next exam.
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Final Suggestion

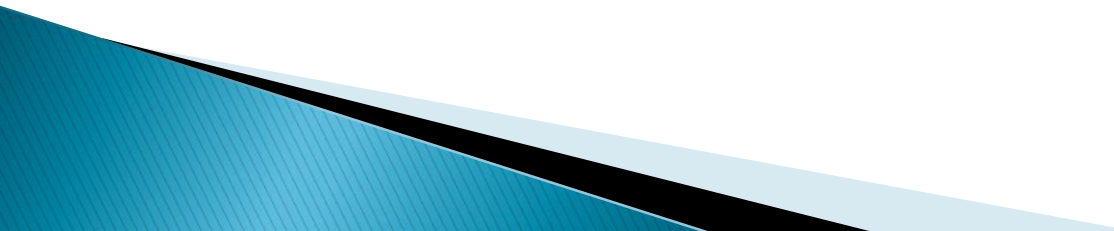
»» Finding out which learning style you have can help you study more effectively...

and reduce test anxiety.

Learning Styles

Ever wonder why someone else's study methods don't work for you?

People Learn in a Variety of Ways

- ▶ Identifying and understanding your learning style can help you maximize your educational experiences by finding more ways to be efficient and perform well.
 - ▶ Knowing your learning style will help you:
 - Figure out the best and most efficient ways to learn and study.
 - Understand which types of tests you may excel on and which may be more difficult.
- 

Test Anxiety is no Mystery When Your Learning Style is Revealed...



Essay Test

Kinesthetic Learners

VISUAL LEARNERS

Best test type:

Diagramming, reading maps, essays, anything showing a process

Worst test type:

Listen and respond tests

CHARACTERISTICS



LEARNING SUGGESTIONS



- Draw or outline the information you need to remember
- Copy what's on the board
- Diagram sentences
- Take notes and make lists
- Color code, highlight, circle and underline words in your notes
- Use flashcards



Tend to be fast talkers, may interrupt



Learn by seeing charts and diagrams



Need quiet study time



May think in pictures



Take detailed notes



Like to sit at the front of the class

AUDITORY LEARNERS

Best test type:

Writing responses to lectures they've heard; oral exams

Worst test type:

Reading passages and writing answers in a timed test

CHARACTERISTICS



LEARNING SUGGESTIONS



- Use word association to remember facts and lines
- Record lectures and watch videos
- Repeat facts with eyes closed
- Participate in group discussions
- Record notes after writing them



Tend to speak slowly, explain things well



Tend to be natural listeners



Tend to repeat things aloud



Think linearly



Read slowly



Prefer to hear, rather than read, information

KINESTHETIC LEARNERS



LEARNING SUGGESTIONS



- Study in short blocks
- Take lab classes
- Go on field trips
- Study with others
- Use memory games and flash cards to memorize facts

CHARACTERISTICS



Tend to be the slowest talkers



Learn by doing and solving real-life problems



Like hands-on approaches



Can't sit still for long, get fidgety



Take breaks when studying



Suffer from short attention spans

What Type of Learner Are You?

- ▶ Please take the Learning Style Inventory
 - <http://people.usd.edu/~bwjames/tut/learning-style/stylest.html>

Count the number of A, B and C answers for results

<http://people.usd.edu/~bwjames/tut/learning-style/styleres.html>

Thank you for attending today's session on
...
TEST ANXIETY and LEARNING STYLES.

