



SUCCESSFUL TEST-TAKING

STRATEGIES TO REDUCE TEST ANXIETY & IMPROVE YOUR SUCCESS:

- ✓ Give yourself time to prepare—at least one to several weeks, depending on how much material there is to review & how well you understand it. “Cramming” is generally not effective & increases stress.
- ✓ Break study/practice sessions into 45 min-1 hr chunks, followed by 10-15 min breaks (stretch, breathe, call a friend, walk around the block, change location, get a snack or coffee...). Reward self after goal achieved.
- ✓ Study some place pleasant, with good light (café, public library, outside?)
- ✓ Study with a friend sometimes, even if he or she is working on something different
- ✓ Study to music if not too distracting—especially instrumental. Bring to test & listen before test.
- ✓ Practice deep breathing. Breathe in: peace, confidence, I know this, I can do it... Breathe out: stress, worry, anxiety, doubt. Practice at home, especially before/during studying, and do before/during test.
- ✓ Practice positive visualization before/during studying and before/during test.
- ✓ Practice positive self-talk. Talk back to negative messages!
- ✓ Watch caffeine intake
- ✓ When practicing, read the question and underline/circle/highlight key words. When taking the actual test on the computer, mentally “underline” key words, or write them down. Put the question into your own words if you’re having trouble understanding it.
- ✓ Form possible answer in your mind **before** looking at answer choices.
- ✓ If you feel anxious, tired, or start to feel your mind drift during the test, stop for a minute, stand up & stretch, take some deep breaths, give yourself a pep-talk, and/or call up a positive image. Then go back to the test. Remember, you have plenty of time.
- ✓ If you have a documented disability or think you may have a disability (such as an anxiety disorder, dyslexia, or ADHD) that is interfering with your ability to succeed on the test, see Jim Wice in Accessibility and Disability Resources to discuss how to get tested for a disability and/or possible testing accommodations.