How to Manage Test Anxiety

*Preventing test anxiety...*

- Try to stay on a reasonably regular schedule of reviewing, eating, sleeping, and relaxing. Start at least a week, or preferably two, before exams begin.

- Do not attempt to study 24 hours a day; your efficiency and capacity to retain material will rapidly decrease.

- Do not force yourself to study beyond your normal limits of concentration. If you find yourself able to concentrate for only 10-20 minutes, study for only that period of time and then take a short break. Your concentration should return. In fact, short and regular study periods are more productive than lengthy single sessions.

- Eat a well-balanced diet and drink lots of fluids. Excessive amounts of coffee may produce confusion and even disorganization of thought processes.

- Do not use drugs or alcohol – they can decrease your ability to think clearly.

- Take medication only under the supervision of a physician.

- Be conservative and reasonable about the demands you place on yourself.

- If you have a problem you believe will interfere with taking your exams, be sure to notify your instructor or a counselor/physician before you take your exam.

*During the exam...*

- Take several **deep breaths**. Continue for a few minutes until you get your breathing and heart rate under control.

- Tense and then **relax** several muscle groups. Move your shoulders in circles, massage your lower back, and move your feet around to get blood flowing.

- Think **positive** images to reduce your anxiety. Picture a scene you find peaceful, and think about what you see, hear, feel, and smell.

- Eat or **drink** something satisfying that will help you feel better.

- Use **positive self-talk** to help you cope and move forward. For example, repeat, “I have the ability to do this,” and not “I’m going to fail this test.”

- Think briefly about post exam **rewards**. What fun will you have after the exam is over?


Source: Academic Skills Center, Dartmouth College