

- ◆ Protein— an energy bar or shake, fruit and peanut butter, cheese, or a healthy salad with protein

Choices Not to Focus On:

- ◆ Processed foods high in fat and simple carbohydrates
- ◆ Sugar - can give an energy rush, then crash. Can make you jittery and nervous then cause depression and anxiety after the rush.
- ◆ Alcohol - reduces the ability to retain information.
- ◆ Appetite disturbance - need to maintain healthy eating habits.
- ◆ Quick energy drinks—may leave you jittery and your brain scattered.

Before Each Test

- ◆ Practice some type of relaxation technique. There are many techniques and a counselor can help you with this.
- ◆ Before starting the test, take a couple of deep breaths and tell yourself "I am ready, I am confident, I can do this".

During the Test

- ◆ If you start to feel anxious, stop, turn you paper over and take a couple of deep breaths. Give yourself a "pep" talk and then continue with the test.
- ◆ Make a fist and squeeze tight. Relax and imagine your whole body relaxing



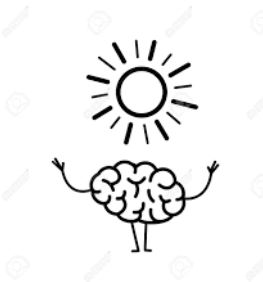
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For more information contact:

- ◆ Leigh Bailey, Counselor
769-1551 x4861
lbailey@gulfcoast.edu
- ◆ Becca Sofarelli, Academic Coach
769-1551 x2829
rsotarell@gulfcoast.edu



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Pathways to College Success



▶ Test Anxiety



Test Anxiety (Performance)

Test anxiety is a type of fear that may cause students to experience physical and mental side effects. Although a small amount of anxiety can be helpful by providing alertness and readiness, too much anxiety can create problems.

The Causes

- ◆ Lack of preparation because of cramming the night before.
- ◆ Poor time management.
- ◆ Poor study habits.
- ◆ Stressed over past performances on tests.
- ◆ Negative consequences of being a failure.
- ◆ Worried how other students are doing.

The Physical Signs

- ◆ Perspiration
- ◆ Fast, shallow breathing
- ◆ Dry Mouth
- ◆ Tense Muscles
- ◆ Sweaty Palms
- ◆ Rapid Heart Beat
- ◆ Headache
- ◆ Upset Stomach



The Effects

- ◆ Going blank on test questions and remembering the correct answers as soon as you leave the exam room.
- ◆ Doing poorly on a test even when you are prepared.
- ◆ Having difficulty reading and understanding test questions.
- ◆ Having difficulty organizing your thoughts.

Ways to Reduce the Anxiety

- ◆ Keep everything in perspective. This is a test, just a test. It does not reflect who you are nor does it make you a good or bad person.
- ◆ Embrace the anxiety. Do not fight it and become frustrated, but use it to give you energy.
- ◆ Prepare for the test by having good study habits. Cramming for a test is a major cause of test anxiety.
- ◆ Relax before bed time and get plenty of sleep the night before the exam.
- ◆ Exercise is a great way to reduce stress but do not overdo it.
- ◆ Make sure you eat nutritious choices the day before and of the exam.
- ◆ Avoid massive intake of caffeine
- ◆ Avoid arriving too early or too late.
- ◆ Avoid listening to others before the exam. Their anxiety may rub off on you.
- ◆ Avoid negative thoughts! While you are breathing, think positive, encouraging thoughts.

- ◆ Avoid last minute studying. Remember: You are prepared.
- ◆ Prepare for your morning routine the night before or leave work a little earlier than normal to avoid last minute interferences.
- ◆ Do not panic over questions you cannot answer. Go to the next question, you may remember the answer later.
- ◆ BREATHE AND RELAX!!!

Nutrition and Test Anxiety

Nutrition plays a huge part in how you handle stress and particularly test anxiety. Below are listed choices to focus and not focus on choices to help with stress.

Choices to Focus On:

- ◆ Whole grains and nuts including walnuts and almonds or a trail mix
- ◆ Fish - particularly wild salmon
- ◆ Berries - especially blueberries
- ◆ Seeds - Pumpkin and sunflower are great choices. - the brain processes seeds into serotonin a neurotransmitter that helps reduce anxiety
- ◆ Mint or Cinnamon - candy or gum - helps with concentration and ability to recall

