

SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES FOR TEST ANXIETY

We all experience some level of anxiety before a test. A little nervousness can actually help motivate us to perform our best. Too much anxiety can become a problem if it interferes with your performance on tests. Some strategies for dealing with test anxiety:

BEFORE THE TEST, TAKE GOOD CARE OF YOURSELF:

- **Be prepared.** Study the material in advance; do not leave cramming for the day before your test. Do not do a last minute review.
- **Get plenty of sleep,** it is hard to function at your best when overtired.
- **Avoid any use of drugs and alcohol,** they can interfere with your mental ability.
- **Exercise** may increase your alertness and sharpen your mind.
- **Have a moderate breakfast,** fresh fruits and vegetables help reduce stress; avoid caffeine, sugar and junk foods.
- **Allow yourself plenty of time;** arrive at the test location early.
- **Choose a seat** where you will not be easily distracted.
- **Use abdominal breathing** to help reduce anxiety. Place one hand on your abdomen, right beneath your rib cage. Inhale through your nose and feel your abdomen fill like a balloon...count to three on your inhalation and then slowly exhale counting to four, feeling your abdomen contracting with the exhalation.
- **Do a reality check,** how important is this exam in the grand scheme of things? Put it in perspective.
- **Use positive affirmations,** say a phrase to help keep things in perspective, "I've done this before, I can do it again." or "I have all the knowledge I need to get this done."

DURING THE TEST TAKE A FEW MINUTES TO:

- **Review the entire test.** Read the directions carefully.
- **Work on the easiest portions of the test first.**
- **Pace yourself.** Do not rush through the test.
- **If you go blank,** skip the question and go on.
- **Multiple choice questions,** read all the options first, eliminate the most obvious.
- **Essay questions,** make a short outline. Begin and end with a summary sentence.
- **Take short breaks,** tense and relax your muscles throughout your body.
- **Pause,** do a few abdominal breaths, say your affirmation.
- **Stay in the present moment.**
- **There is no reward for being the first done.**

AFTER THE TEST, REWARD YOURSELF:

- **Try not to dwell on your mistakes.**
- **Indulge in something relaxing for awhile.**

***IF TEST-TAKING ANXIETY PERSISTS & BECOMES PROBLEMATIC,
CONSIDER VISITING YOUR SCHOOL COUNSELOR OR
OTHER HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONAL***

TO LEARN MORE, VISIT OUR WEBSITE: freedomfromfear.org