

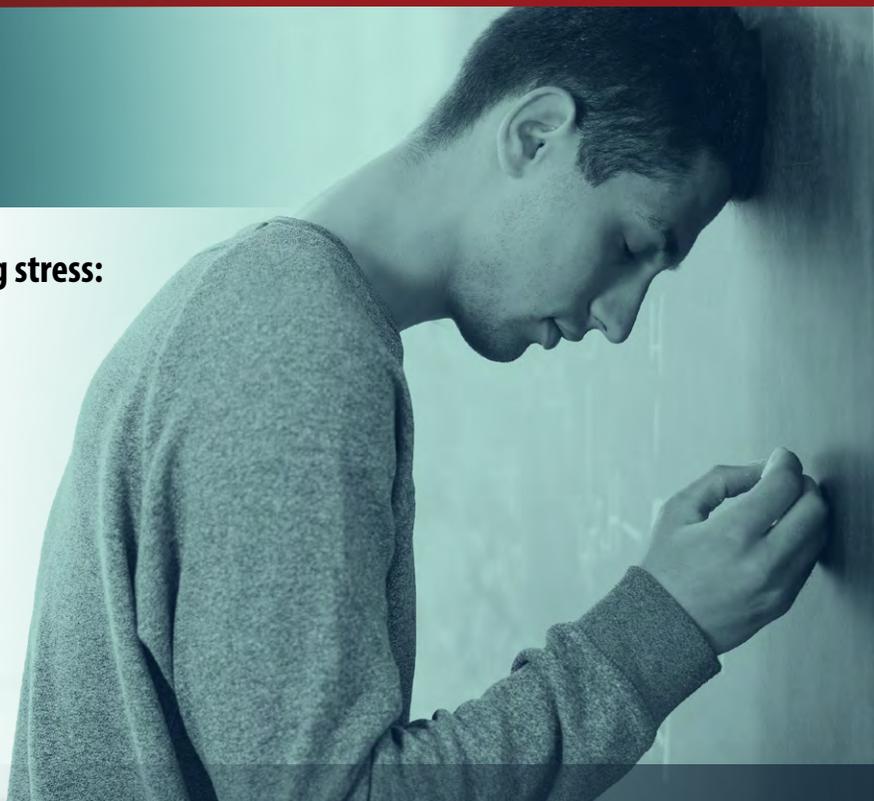
TEST TAKING

ANXIETY *and* STRESS

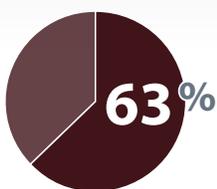
Test anxiety can cause emotional, physical and cognitive reactions, and could begin weeks or even months in advance of the test.

Common factors that contribute to test-taking stress:

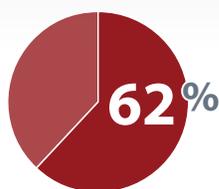
- Pressure to perform
- Lack of self-confidence
- Uncertainty about taking the right academic path and career choice
- Perceptions of workload and time restraints
- Lack of preparation
- Fear of failure
- Perfectionism
- A history of poor test-taking
- Generalized anxiety disorder and/or genetics



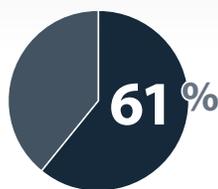
Several non-academic stressors may be a factor in test anxiety, especially in college students.



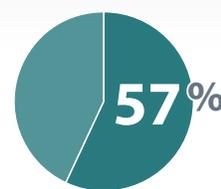
The future of the country



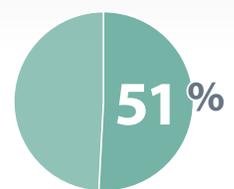
Money



Work



The political climate



Violence and crime

how to

REDUCE STRESS:

Before the Test

Plan:

Create an environment that allows you to focus on your studies undisturbed and remove distractions. Use natural light, if possible, and set up a space you enjoy.

Schedule:

Practice time management by scheduling your day into time blocks devoted to life, work, and classwork.

Relax:

Consider deep breathing techniques for relaxation which can be done anywhere, any time. Take in a deep breath, hold it for a few seconds, and then slowly exhale, repeat several times and feel your body calm.

[Try a morning mindfulness exercise.](#)

Study and Practice:

Don't wait until the last minute to study; cramming adds to your anxiety levels. Create a schedule of study time so it does not fall all at once and be specific. For example, 30 minutes a day for 2 weeks.

Prepare:

On the day of the test, eat a good breakfast, dress comfortably, and set aside time for 15 minutes of physical activity, preferably outside. During this time, push away thoughts of test anxiety. Notice the birds, the colors of the trees, and the freshness of the air.



Next: how to reduce stress during and after the test

how to

REDUCE STRESS:

During and After the Test

During

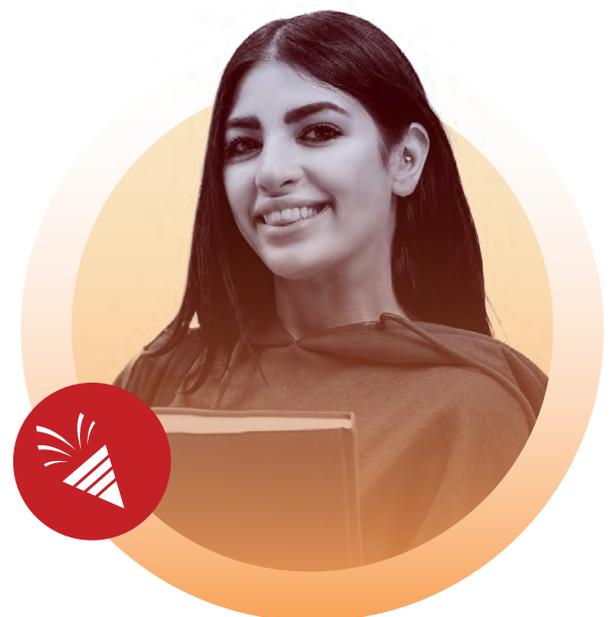
- On test day, accept that you've done all you can to prepare. You must let go of what you may not know.
- If the test format allows it, answer all the questions you know first; then go back and work on the questions you feel less confident about.
- Create an imaginary bubble around your workspace, so you're less apt to get distracted. Practice deep breathing. Focus on positive statements such as, "This is only one test," and "I know this material."
- If you find yourself tensing up, do a head-to-toe body scan and relax your stress-holding muscles: relax your jaw, roll your shoulders and relax them, let go of tension in your spine, uncurl your toes, and shake out your hands. Smile, even if you have to force it.



After

Congratulations! Pat yourself on the back and continue the techniques above to redirect and push away lingering negative thoughts. Get back to basics.

Remember, one test won't likely hurt, let alone ruin your academic career.



Back to Basics

Eat nutritious, sustaining food.

On test day especially, avoid high sugar foods that can cause a crash. If caffeine causes jitteriness, skip the big coffee or energy drink.



[Get Healthy Recipes](#)

Get enough sleep.

Sleep is directly related to academic performance and can soothe anxiety.

[Tips for Better Sleep Habits](#)

Stay active.

Exercise is proven to heighten focus, elevate mood, increase energy, sharpen memory and more.

[Find time for fitness as a busy student](#)

Practice mindfulness and relaxation techniques.

Mental health is essential to our overall well-being and as important as physical health.

[View 4 ideas for self-care and stress relief](#)

Manage your time and prepare.

Many schools offer study-skill classes, tutors and other resources. There are several free apps that can help with productivity, scheduling and more.

[Discover useful time management apps for students](#)

Don't be afraid to seek help.

If you are unable to self-regulate or reduce your stress and anxiety symptoms, contact your student assistance program for 24/7 access to counseling and resources.

[Help is available](#)

Take care of your mental health and well-being. You don't have to do it alone.

Your Student Assistance Program (SAP) by Perspectives provides support, counseling and resources to address the stressors that impact your health, in and out of school.

Call or Text 24/7 | 800.456.6327 | perspectivesltd.com

Source: Purdue University Global, blog, Aug. 30, 2019, [How to Reduce Test Anxiety for College Students](#)



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