

Tell us what you think!



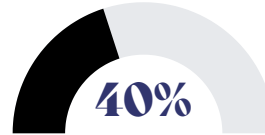
COPING WITH TEST ANXIETY

Check out the evidence!

WHAT IS TEST ANXIETY?



① Test anxiety is a type of **performance anxiety** in which people experience severe distress and anxiety in testing situations.¹



Test anxiety is very common, and impacts around **40%** of university students.⁹

HOW TEST ANXIETY IMPACTS PERFORMANCE

Test anxiety can sometimes **negatively impact** our performance **despite all of our hard work** in preparing for an exam.^{5,8}

Test anxiety can influence our...

Physical responses (e.g., racing heart, sweaty palms, headache)

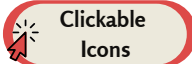
Thoughts (e.g., worry, racing thoughts, inability to focus)

Surprisingly, these **physical responses** can actually help us perform better. **Keep in mind:** if they are too extreme, this may become a problem.⁵

Rather, it's the **cognitive responses** to test anxiety (i.e., worrying, racing thoughts, inability to concentrate) that undermine performance.⁵⁻⁶


Luckily, there are ways to better manage test anxiety, both before exams and while taking them!

A FEW TIPS TO BETTER MANAGE TEST ANXIETY

In the following sections, we'll present some strategies to help better manage test anxiety. We've also included  to other infographics that present further information and more examples of quick tips!

BEFORE AN EXAM, TRY...

THINKING OF SELF-CARE AS "GOING INTO TRAINING" FOR EXAMS


 View the Self-care resource!

Self-care is especially important in stressful situations,⁷ such as preparing for an exam!

Here are some quick self care tips to use in the time leading up to an exam:




✓ Make sure to have some **healthy food or snack options** easily available.

 View the Smart Nutrition resource!




✓ Try **planning out a study schedule** ahead of time, and make sure to factor in adequate time for sleep!

 View the Improving Time Management resource!



✓ Fit in a **few minutes of exercise in-between study sessions**, if possible! It can be either a high intensity exercise or a quick walk!

 View the Physical Well-being resource!

PRACTICING MINDFULNESS

✓ Try doing a **sitting meditation**, **body scan**, or even some **mindfulness-based coloring** (e.g., mandalas) before a test!⁴

! **Regular meditation practice** will make it easier to access that sense of calm or feeling grounded while being in a stressful situation.

[View the Mindfulness resource!](#)

MANAGING YOUR EXPECTATIONS

✓ Try to keep the test in perspective. Remind ourselves that the test we're doing is **important**, but not doing well on the test doesn't mean we won't do well in the **future**.²

[View the Managing Expectations resource!](#)

✓ Being highly self-critical might **seem** like it will help you be more productive. However, that can actually backfire! Try some self-compassion activities instead.

[View the Self-Criticism & Self-Compassion resource!](#)

DURING AN EXAM, TRY...

PRACTICING GOOD TEST-TAKING SKILLS

✓ Make sure to **look over the whole test** before beginning and read instructions carefully.

✓ **Start with the questions you know** to build your confidence before returning to the difficult ones.²

✓ If you truly do not know the answer to a question, recognize that this is normal and don't let it **throw you off**.^{2, 7}

[View the Study Skills & Procrastination resource!](#)

Instead, simply answer it to the best of your ability, even if that means making an **intelligent guess**.⁷

IMPROVING PERFORMANCE BY REFRAMING TEST ANXIETY

[View the Perspective Taking resource!](#)

CHALLENGE YOUR THOUGHTS³

✓ "It's normal to feel anxious while taking a test"
But, it is not a concern if you don't feel anxious!

✓ "Feeling anxious does not mean I will do poorly on the test."
In fact, feeling anxious can even help your performance!

REFRAME TEST ANXIETY

Have you ever noticed that physical reactions to stress (racing heart, sweaty palms) are similar when we are either anxious or alert?

✓ Instead of: "I'm feeling **anxious** about my upcoming text" try thinking: "I'm feeling **amped** about this test!"

USING PHYSICAL CALMING STRATEGIES

✓ Taking a few **Calming Breaths** or using **Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR)** can be helpful when we are experiencing physical stress responses, such as a fast heartbeat, feeling shaky, or nausea during a test.

[View the Calming Breath resource!](#)

[View the PMR resource!](#)



FEEDBACK & CONTACT INFORMATION

**EDUCATION
FOR
MENTAL
HEALTH
RESILIENCE**



View the reference list for
this infographic



Contact us for more information at
emhr@mcgill.ca

Dr. Nancy Heath
Director of EMHR
Faculty of Education



nancy.heath@mcgill.ca