

Tips to Beat Exam Anxiety

Exam anxiety can prevent us from achieving our full potential. Overcome your fear with these easy tips.

Be Prepared

Minimizing the unknowns will reduce your overall stress and make it easier to take an exam. In addition to studying any subject matter, plan your pre-exam routine. If your exam is being administered at an unfamiliar location, conduct a dry-run to familiarize yourself with the route. Make a schedule that will allow you to eat, drive, and arrive in plenty of time. Be sure to have all of your exam materials (e.g. identification, important documents, writing utensils, etc.) “ready-to-go” before the day of your exam.

Body & Mind

Healthy diet, regular exercise, and a good night’s rest will positively impact your physical and mental well-being, and in turn, your exam-taking abilities.

Learn to relax

If your mind is blocked by tension during the exam, close your eyes and take a deep breath. Let it (and your nerves) out slowly. Once you’ve calmed down, return to the exam. A couple more relaxation techniques to try:

Tension Differential Method

1. While sitting in a chair, put your feet flat on the floor.
2. Grab the underneath of your chair, having your arms to the sides of your body.
3. Push down with your feet and pull up with your hands at the same time.
4. Hold for five seconds, then release. Relax for ten seconds.
5. Repeat this procedure two or three times.
6. Relax all of your muscles and return to the exam.

Palming Method

1. Close and cover your eyes using the center of the palms of your hands.
2. Prevent your hands from touching your eyes by resting the lower parts of your palms on your cheekbones and placing your fingers on your forehead.
3. Visualize a peaceful and relaxing scene. Picture it as if you were actually there, looking through your own eyes.
4. Keep this image for one to two minutes.
5. Uncover your eyes and return to the exam.

Stay focused

Concentrate on your exam and the question at hand. Don’t worry about whether or not you will pass or how fast other people finish their exam. (Worrying won’t help anything!) Read the directions and ask yourself, “What is it that I have to do?”

Think positive

Be optimistic when preparing and taking your exam. Say to yourself, “I am prepared,” “I am relaxed,” and “I will do well on this exam.” If you think you can’t, you won’t.