

Managing Test Anxiety

Expect to feel some anxiety! It's a sign that your body is making adrenaline to prepare you. The good news is adrenaline is not dangerous. It can just feel uncomfortable.

Remember: this test is just a chance to show what you know. That's all it is.

If an anxious thought pops up like "I'm gonna bomb this" simply notice the thought and let it go. Think of it as boring news...you've probably heard it in your head a THOUSAND times before. Yawn.

Tell yourself things like "This is not as big a deal as it feels" or "I've been through stressful things before, I can handle this too" or "I've worried about failing before and I usually do fine."

Or simply repeat a short mantra: I can do this.

Pause, and inhale and exhale slowly three times. Drop your shoulders and relax your body. Feel your feet firmly on the ground. Feel the weight of your body on the chair.

When you get the test:

Read the directions and get a sense of where on the test you want to spend most of your time.

In the margins, write down anything you are worried about forgetting.

Take it one step at a time, one question at a time. Try not to get ahead of yourself.

Answer the easy questions first to build confidence. Skip the ones you are less sure about and return to them later.

Remember:

Being prepared for the test is the BEST way to reduce anxiety!

What to do During a Panic Attack

Imagine your panicky feelings as a wave that you ride up and back down.

Try not to suppress or resist as this can make things feel worse. Although a panic attack feels really horrible, it is temporary and not dangerous.

Keep bringing your focus back to the present. Some things that can help: Look around you and name objects to yourself. Feel the weight of your body on the seat or ground. Go outside. Hold on to something solid like a table or tree. Sit with someone you trust. Move your body to burn off excess adrenaline.

Slow down your breathing to a natural rate. Breathing fast can lead to dizziness.

Remind yourself that:

This is not my fault. It sucks, but my body is just reacting to a surge of adrenaline.

I am not going crazy, it's just anxiety. I will not fall, faint, die, or lose control.

This is temporary. I am OK.

This is private. Others may not even notice.

It's not my job to stop the panicky feelings. It will end no matter what I do. My job is to ride it out.

When panic subsides, feel proud that you got through it.

And get on with your day.