

Learning Café Quick Study Tips

MATH ANXIETY

*Would you rather go to a dental appointment than attend a math class?
If you answered “yes,” then you are probably suffering from math anxiety, a disability you
have probably learned over time. However, anything that is learned can be unlearned.*

Here are some suggestions for reducing your math anxiety.



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Taking a Math Class

Prior to Class

- A major cause of math anxiety is being under prepared. Since math builds one skill upon another, it is vital to be enrolled in a course that is compatible with your abilities.
- Preview relevant text sections, so you have some familiarity with concepts.
- Find out what resources are available if you encounter difficulties. Your instructor, the Learning Café, or classmates can provide invaluable support.

During Class

- Find a balance between copying everything the instructor writes on the board & trying to understand the concepts. Record 1 or 2 key examples & a text reference page number.
- Stay focused. When frustrated or confused, you may lose concentration. Pay close attention even when you don't understand. You can work on solving the issue after class.
- Don't be shy: Ask questions when you feel lost. Volunteer to work out problems on the board.

After Class

- Review text material. Work through examples with paper & pencil until you understand.
- Do & correct the margin exercises.
- Do the assigned homework, & then do some extra questions. Practice! Practice! Practice!
- Take questions one at a time. If completely stuck on a question, skip it, & come back to it later. If you still can't get it on your second try, mark the item & ask someone for help.
- Develop a strategy for solving word problems. Try this one:
 - Read the problem until you understand what is being asked. Draw a picture to visualize the problem. Identify what has been given & what you are looking for. Assign the unknown a letter (or variable).
 - Write an equation using the variable. Then, solve the equation.
 - Check your answer. Is it reasonable & accurate? State your answer clearly with units.
- If you don't understand a concept, seek help immediately. Avoiding your problem areas will not help you understand them better!

Getting Ready for a Math Test

Think Positively. Sometimes when working on weaker skills, it is easy to become negative. Challenge yourself to stay focused & tackle difficulties one at a time. Visualize your success!

Don't cram. Study a little every day. Frequent review will increase your confidence & mastery of a concept. Daily practice also identifies areas which require extra work.

Use various study strategies

- Make flash cards for key vocabulary, concepts, or problems.
- Thoroughly complete textbook chapter reviews & tests.
- Form a study group & meet regularly.
- Write your own test using sample questions from your notes & text. Select 1 or 2 questions from each section & create a separate answer key. Take the practice test under test-like conditions (timed, no notes, quiet). After, mark the test & rework questions you missed.

Prepare a test kit: sharp pencils, erasers, tissues, bottled water, calculator, times table, ...

Take care of yourself

- Take study breaks to refresh yourself.
- Get a good night's sleep, especially the night before the exam.
- Eat properly. Pay attention to the effect caffeine has on your body.

Taking a Math Test

Think positively & relax. Panic is a common response but remind yourself that you are ready for the test; you can do this! Breathe slowly in through your nose & out through your mouth.

Do a data dump. When you get the test, jot down formulas & facts you need to remember.

Read & follow the directions carefully. Underline key information before answering questions.

Skim the test & plan your attack. Do easier questions first. Save the hardest ones for last.

Work carefully, neatly, & systematically. Errors commonly occur when students rush, take shortcuts, or scribble quick responses. Don't rush, but also be aware of the time, & don't dwell too long on one question.

Ask the instructor questions if needed. At worst, the instructor will say, "I can't answer that question." At best, the instructor will help you over a hurdle.

Dealing with the Aftermath

Let the results go. You have used a lot of energy & may be low or off balance. Refresh yourself by taking some time for yourself.

When you get your test results back, stay calm. Do not compare your results with anyone. It is not a competition. You have no control over the results of others.

Listen as the instructor reviews the exam. Watch for areas of strength & weakness. Learn from your mistakes. Make note of concepts requiring further review.

Keep the test (if you can) & use it to improve. Review the test & learn the material you missed. Use it to prepare for other exams, such as midterms & finals.

*For more information on any of the suggestions given here, please visit the Learning Café, located in the library (CE1340) / 403-382-6952 / learningcafe@lethbridgecollege.ca
Or sign up for a Student Success Workshop!*