

# Learning Café Quick Study Tips

## TEST ANXIETY

*Test anxiety is an uneasiness or stress over the thought of being evaluated. Most of us experience some stress related to test taking. If we didn't, we probably wouldn't take time to prepare! However, some students become test anxious beyond what is usual.*

Some students have poor study skills & may have trouble learning course material. They are unprepared for tests & do not possess the necessary learning & study strategies. Other students have better study & learning strategies but have problems demonstrating their knowledge in a test situation. These students worry too much about their performance & the consequences of failure.



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### HOW CAN I REDUCE TEST ANXIETY?

There are several ways you can decrease your test anxiety. You need to be aware of what to do *before* & *during* the testing situation.

## BEFORE THE TEST

### Be completely prepared

- ➔ Learn the day's material (read/understand/memorize) the day you receive the information. Study your material in advance & then review.
- ➔ While studying, use active learning strategies.
  - Ask yourself good questions which make you think about the information you read. Then practice writing answers to the anticipated questions.
  - Create mind maps & charts to summarize a unit.
  - Create flash cards for new vocabulary.
- ➔ If your study skills are poor, consider attending some Learning Café workshops.

### Know the expectations

- ➔ Attend all classes, & listen for test-related clues.
- ➔ Ask your instructor for study guides or samples of old exams. Then you'll know what to focus on during study.
- ➔ Refer to your course or text learning objectives.

### Prepare mentally & physically

- ➔ Find your best method of concentration. When are you most alert? Does silence or music help you focus? What distractions need to be eliminated?
- ➔ Be positive.
  - Visualize success. Think of yourself in the classroom, looking at each section of the test & answering the questions quickly & confidently.
  - Learn to monitor negative self-talk. Train yourself to rephrase negative thoughts by focusing on positive strategies & reactions.
- ➔ Practice relaxation techniques.
  - Exercise aerobically to reduce body tension & get your mind relaxing.
  - Breathe deeply. Slowing your breathing will increase your oxygen intake & help you regain focus.
  - Use yoga or meditation to teach yourself self control.

## **Don't cram!**

- ➔ "Drawing a blank" is common when students have crammed. Don't try to learn everything all in one night. Study in pieces & try to review a little bit everyday.

## **DURING THE TEST**

### **Be test-wise**

- ➔ Read over the test & plan your approach.
  - Make sure you understand all instructions & expectations. Don't be afraid to ask your instructor any questions you might have.
  - Be aware of point values for each section, & set time guidelines for each section.

### **Spill**

- ➔ Before you begin writing the exam, write down formulas, procedures, mind maps, or definitions you may need to use.

### **Stay focused**

- ➔ Develop an aggressive, yet realistic attitude. Approach the test determined to do your best.
- ➔ Pay attention to the test.
  - Don't doubt or blame yourself. Focus on what you can control *now*.
  - Don't waste time worrying about others around you.
- ➔ If you happen to go blank, go on to another question or another part of the test.

### **Relax & stay cool**

- ➔ Relax yourself physically during the test. Use relaxation techniques such as the ones you practiced during your study time.
  - For example, if you find yourself worrying too much about one problem, not reading carefully or forgetting information, put your test aside & take several deep breaths.
- ➔ Don't panic if you feel a little tense.
  - Avoid talking to others about the test immediately beforehand – it can increase your anxiety.
  - Talk to yourself in a positive way before & during an exam. Remind yourself of times when you successfully accomplished the same task.
  - Don't aim for an A if you haven't studied for an A. Instead, aim to show accurately what you do know.

### **Process questions systematically**

- ➔ Go through the entire test doing questions you know well first. Write a halftime goal on your test. Then check when you get there to see if you should increase your pace.

### **Don't give an exam more power than it deserves**

- ➔ A test measures how accurately you can answer certain questions on a certain day. It does *not* measure how smart you are or your worth as a person.

*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](mailto:learningcafe@lethbridgecollege.ca)  
Or sign up for a Student Success Workshop!*