

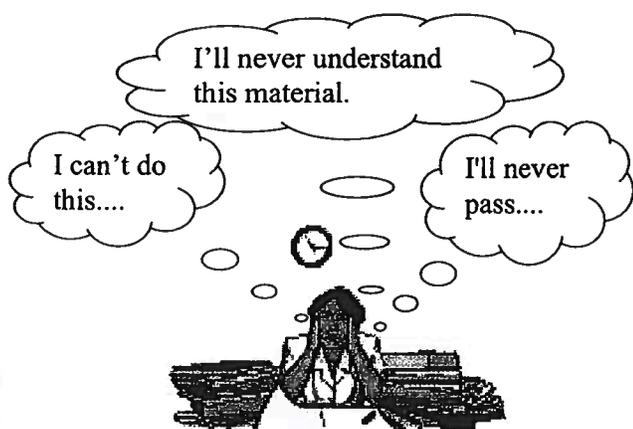
DEALING WITH TEST ANXIETY

Generally, we all experience some level of nervousness or tension when taking tests. A little nervousness can actually help motivate us to do better; however, too much of it can interfere with our ability to prepare and perform on a test. This is what we refer to as test anxiety. Here are five tips to help you calm your test anxiety.

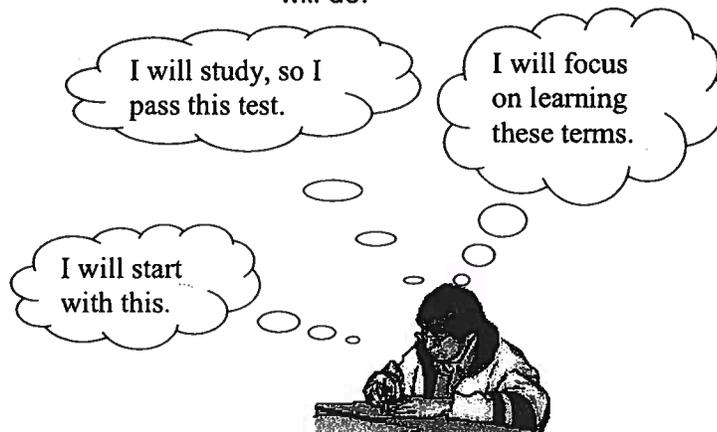
Before the test...

Monitor your self-talk

Be aware of what you are telling yourself. Listen to your inner dialogue about test taking and challenge negative thoughts by changing them into positive self-talk.



Positive self-talk focuses on what you want and what you will do.



Practice controlled breathing and muscle relaxation

Deep breathing and relaxation calms anxiety. Practice these exercises **before** you feel anxious, so you can learn to relax when you need to the most, such as when taking a test.

Steps to controlled breathing

1. Close your eyes.
2. Inhale slowly to the count of three.
3. Hold your breath to the count of three.
4. Exhale slowly to the count of three.
5. Count to three before the next inhale.
6. Repeat the cycle several times.

Steps toward muscle relaxation

1. Contract your hands into fists and hold to the count of three.
2. Now, relax hands until they are limp. Focus on the feeling of relaxation.
3. Repeat steps 1 and 2 with various parts of your body, beginning with your shoulders. Note: when contracting your legs push out with the heel to avoid cramping.
4. Do this until you feel calm.

The above three methods are highly effective when combined!

