



TEST ANXIETY: Causes and Eliminators

Causes	Eliminators
1. Trying to meet others' expectations	Decide whether living up to these expectations is something you want to do for yourself. Set your own goals and live up to your own expectations.
2. Letting grades determine your self-worth	Realize that a grade is only an approximate measure of your performance. Grades have nothing to do with you as a person but are a helpful guide to what you need to review.
3. Fearing loss of affection	Understand that people like you and value your presence in their lives for many reasons, none of which is the grade you made on a test.
4. Feeling helpless, with no control over what happens	The way to take control is to develop an internal locus of control. Improve your study habits. Prepare for your next test, and observe the connection between the amount and quality of your studying and the grade you make.
5. You have never really considered the mechanics of test-taking	Actually, this involves another control issue. Learn about how to take different kinds of tests and then apply techniques with which you are most comfortable.

Strategies to Improve Concentration

Causes of Poor Concentration	Strategies
1. I am easily distracted.	Eliminate your distractions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Get enough sleep.• Study when rested.• Eat well so that you won't be hungry.• Study with a partner to increase motivation.• Create a good study place; do all your studying there.
2. My mind wanders when I read.	Become an active reader: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Formulate a purpose.• Turn headings into questions.• Underline main ideas.• Summarize key ideas in margins.• Look up unfamiliar words.
3. I can't find time to study.	Learn to manage your time: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Take fewer courses.• Adjust work hours.• Ask family members to help out with chores.• Make a study schedule.• Use a calendar and daily lists.
4. I procrastinate.	Follow a six step plan: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Break long assignments into smaller parts.• Reward yourself for completing work.• Schedule time for long assignments.• Assemble your materials.• Get help if you need it.• Think positively about your ability to complete assignments.
5. My mind goes blank on tests.	Reduce test anxiety: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prepare adequately for tests.• Learn how to practice a relaxation technique.

Causes of Poor Concentration

Strategies

6. I don't like my instructor.

Develop an internal locus of control:

- Accept your instructor's limitations.
- Accept your responsibility to raise your interest level.
- Accept the course as a step you must take to reach your goals.

7. The course doesn't relate to my job.

Look beyond your job:

- Welcome new learning opportunities.
- Set realistic and flexible goals.

8. The assignment is too hard.

Make assignments easier:

- Be sure you know what to do.
- Break long assignments into smaller parts.
- Allow plenty of time.
- Ask your instructor for help.

9. I don't have a goal.

Decide what you want to do:

- Get a feel for college life.
- Visit the career development center.
- Choose a major; make career plans.

10. I can't listen and take notes at the same time.

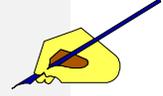
Learn how to take notes:

- Sit up front.
- Watch the speaker's gestures and expressions.
- Listen for key words.
- Copy information from the board.
- Skip lines between main ideas.

Causes:

Strategy:

TAKING OBJECTIVE EXAMS



Here's a checklist of suggestions for taking objective exams:

- 1. Glance through the whole exam first. Estimate the amount of time you'll have for each answer (e.g., 2 minutes for 30 questions).
- 2. Underline the key words in the stem of each question (e.g., the major cause for the fall of ancient Rome was...)
- 3. On each item, eliminate answers you know are wrong first. For example, items containing words like "all," "always," or "never" are often wrong.
- 4. Watch for choices like "all of the above" or "choices 2 and 3 only." There may be more than one correct answer listed among the choices.
- 5. Do all items you are sure of first. Put an asterisk(*) next to those you are unsure of and a check next to those you don't know at all.
- 6. Do the * items second, then the checked items. Do not change your answers: your first answers are most likely to be correct. Use information from answers you are most sure of to give yourself hints in answering questions you are less sure of.
- 7. On math tests, check your work by estimating answers. For example, if you're multiplying two 2-digit numbers, your answer needs at least three digits.
- 8. Check over your test after you've finished it. Especially when taking exams on a separate machine-scored sheet, make sure the numbers you marked accurately correspond to those on the exam booklet.

Instruction Words Used in Essay Questions

Instruction Words	Meanings
Compare	Explain similarities and differences.
Contrast	Explain differences only.
Criticize or evaluate	Make a judgment about strengths and weaknesses, work or merit, positive or negative aspects.
Define	Give a precise and accurate meaning.
Describe	Give a mental impression, a detailed account.
Discuss or Explain	Give reasons, facts, details that show you understand.
Enumerate or list	State points one by one and briefly explain.
Illustrate	Explain by using examples.
Interpret	Explain in your own words and discuss significance.
Justify or prove	Construct an argument for or against and support with evidence.
Outline	Describe in general and cover main points.
Relate	Show a connection among ideas.
Summarize	Condense main ideas; state briefly.
Trace	Describe a series of steps, stages, or events.

Deep Breathing Exercises

1. Take your attention completely away from the test (or studying or anything else stressful) for 20 or 30 seconds. The few seconds involved will cost you little and they may gain you much. It is important to forget the test for the moment.
2. Settle back or slump into a comfortable and relaxing position and close your eyes. Do not try to do this breathing exercise in anything but the most comfortable position you can quickly assume.
3. Relax every muscle in your body. Just let go and make yourself as floppy as a rag doll. Some people help this along by first tensing all their muscles in the comfortable position they have assumed, holding the tension for about five seconds, and then letting go and relaxing completely.
4. This is the most important step of all. After you have let go and relaxed completely, take a very deep breath, hold it for a few seconds, then very slowly let it out. Repeat this step two or three times, keeping your eyes closed.
5. You can deepen the relaxation and help ease tension by repeating to yourself the words "calm" and "relax" as you slowly exhale. Practice relaxing and deep-breathing while you study and before your test so that you become adept to the technique and can relax quickly and completely during the test.

Stated more briefly, the **IMPORTANT** steps are:

- 1. Forget about the test.**
- 2. Get comfortable.**
- 3. Relax all muscles.**
- 4. Take slow, deep breaths.**
- 5. Think "calm" and "relax".**

The key to this procedure is to relax all over and take several slow, deep breaths. If it helps, you can adjust the rest of the procedure to make it work better for you. It is very important to practice this exercise while sitting at a table or desk because that is the way you will have to do it when you take your test.

There is good evidence that such deep-breathing exercise has the effect of directly slowing down your heart rate and reducing accompanying anxiety.

