

TEST ANXIETY ACTION PLAN

Feeling some anxiety before an exam is normal and can even improve performance, but when worry interferes with your ability to demonstrate what you know, it's time to use strategies to keep it manageable.

Step 1: Identify Your Triggers

- Waiting until the last minute to study
- Fear of disappointing myself
- Fear of disappointing others
- Comparing myself to classmates
- Previous poor exam performance
- Time pressure during exams
- Multiple exams in one week
- Difficult course content

Step 2: Build Confidence Before the Exam

Complete these actions during the week leading up to your exam.

Academic Preparation

- I know the exam day, time, and location
- I understand what will be covered
- I have practiced retrieving information
- I have identified topics I still need to review
- I have attended office hours and peer tutoring if needed

Physical Preparation

- I have maintained a regular sleep schedule
- I have eaten regular meals
- I have stayed hydrated
- I have made time for myself

Step 3: Reframe Unhelpful Thoughts

Replace anxious thoughts with realistic alternatives.

Instead of thinking...

I'm going to fail.....

Try telling yourself...

I've prepared, and I'll do the best I can today.

If I don't get an A, I'm a failure.....

One exam does not define my abilities.

If I get stuck, it's over.....

I can skip a question and come back later.

Step 4: Have a Plan for Anxiety During the Exam

If you notice your anxiety increasing during an exam, pause for a few slow, deep breaths and take a moment to relax your shoulders and refocus. Read each question carefully, start with the questions you know, skip difficult ones and return to them later, and avoid comparing your pace to other students. Focus only on the question in front of you.

Step 5: Reflect Afterwards

After the exam, ask yourself:

- What preparation strategies worked well?
- What would I change next time?
- What did I learn about my study habits?

Use this information to improve your preparation next time.



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