Test Anxiety: Strategies that Can Help
Yerkes-Dobson Law

Performance

Arousal

Optimal arousal
Optimal performance

Impaired performance
because of strong anxiety

Increasing attention
and interest

Strong

Weak

Low

High

Photo courtesy of the University of Kentucky Counseling Center
## Test Anxiety

### What it is:

- Impairing level of anxiety that is triggered by a test
- Anxiety that blocks your ability to prepare for or to recall information during

### What it isn’t:

- Worry because you did not prepare
- Anxiety Disorder
- Learning Disability
- Something with a *quick fix*
Fight, Flight, or Freeze
Step 1: Self-Care

Take Breaks - Don’t Start in a Deficit

1. Sleeping
2. Eating & Hydrating
3. Exercise
Take Breaks!
GO OUTSIDE
Step 2: Relaxation

Pace Your Breathing
Try Square Breathing

Progressive Muscle Relaxation
Feet down, pull on seat, 5 second, relax for 10

Palm Method
Place your palms over your eyes and imagine a safe place
Step 2: Relaxation

- Moving Your Eyes
- Chewing Gum or Cool Water
- Calming Scent
**Step 3: Make A Plan**

1. Visualize Success & Overcoming
2. Compose a memorized outline
3. Do a memory dump
4. Skip hard questions
5. Cancel out answers
6. Don’t change your answer…
Step 4: Self-Talk Check-in

**Negative Thoughts**
- Automatic thoughts that are tied to anxiety
- Usually highlights your deep fears
- Doesn’t take in whole picture
- Makes it feel like your value is dependent on this one test

**VS.**

**Fair Thoughts**
- Usually, we need to pause and talk to ourself intentionally
- Acknowledges your concern/responds like a friend would
- Takes in the whole picture
- Highlights your value and self-respect
Counseling Services Recommends:

Emotion Wellbeing Workshops
Anxiety Toolbox &/or Recognition, Insight, and Openness

End of Quarter Workshops
Maximizing Your Time & Stress Survival Kit

Contact Us 24/7 to Talk
805-756-2511

& Don’t Forget to Check out the Academic Skills Center at Cal P
Let’s Review

1. Take Care of Yourself
2. Practice Relaxation
3. Make a Plan
4. Check-in with Your Self-Talk

- Connect with Resources -
Have Feedback?

Please scan this code or email us at counseling@calpoly.edu