



BEFORE THE TEST

If you do not do well on tests, or if you feel a lot of test anxiety, here are some important steps that you should try before the test:

THE NIGHT BEFORE

1. Study thoroughly, but do not stay up late. If you do not get a fair amount of rest and sleep, you will defeat all your good intentions. Budget your time that day so that you can complete your review and still go to bed at a decent hour.
2. Make your study time the last thing you do that night before preparing for sleep. Do not read, talk on the phone, or watch T.V. after studying. Research shows that the last thing on your mind before sleep will be your best. And doing anything after studying might be more mentally distracting than you think. The idea is to go to bed feeling comfortable about what you know and not to let anything else get in the way.

THAT MORNING

3. Pay attention to nutritional needs. You need to keep your energy level constant over time. Eating the wrong foods can make your energy too high, too low, or short-lived. **Avoid** caffeine as in coffee or tea. **Avoid** sugary foods as in donuts, some cereals, and coffee cakes. These foods give a rush of energy right after having been eaten, but you will “peak” quickly, and then your energy level will “crash”. **Avoid** greasy foods such as fried eggs or hash browns. Grease will cause sluggishness and can upset your stomach. It is hard to digest. **Avoid** acidic foods such as orange, tomato, or grapefruit juice. If you are nervous, you will already have enough acid in your stomach.

Eat a light breakfast, such as fruit (cantaloupe, banana, or apple is fine) and a piece of lightly buttered or dry toast. And don't forget to **drink some water**. Not too much, but a glass or two when you first wake up is a good idea. If you eat too much, then your blood will be drawn toward your stomach to aid in digestion. That's why you get sleepy when you eat a big meal—there's less blood in your brain.

If you find coffee hard to give up, try stretching and light exercise. These activities help wake you up, and without an upset stomach or a nervous feeling.

4. **Do not** look at your books or notes. Remember, you reached a point the night before where you felt comfortable with the material. Why risk that feeling by a hasty and probably confusing look at the material you have already gone over?

RIGHT BEFORE THE TEST

5. Again, don't look at your book or notes. In fact, you might not want to bring your book to the test. And if you go early, students talking about the test material might be distracting. Often they are confused and frantically searching for solutions at the last minute. Ignore what other students have to say before a test. Remember, in your review the night before, you felt good about what you know. Do not allow yourself to become confused.
6. If you find yourself becoming anxious, use the relaxation techniques that you have been practicing. If self-doubts begin to form in your mind, remember to direct thoughts away from what you cannot do to what you **can** do. Then focus attention away from yourself and toward the task at hand.

