

TEST ANXIETY

The following script is designed to encourage rational thinking and eliminate unproductive worrying when taking tests. By practicing this script several times a day over a period of time, one can work at reducing anxiety-producing habits. The time that is usually consumed with unproductive worrying can be focused towards productive study and/or calm test taking.

This script is a helpful base from which to begin. You may want to alter it to make it more personally meaningful to you. Just make sure your statements reflect what is objectively true (not wishful thinking),

Step 1:
take it **EASY**



Relax—Sit in a comfortable position and slow your breathing down to 3-5 cycles per minute. Inhale with a full, deep breath through your nose as you count to ten. Hold to a count of 8 seconds, then exhale through tightly pursed lips, and count to ten slowly. Repeat the cycle for ten repetitions, or until you are feeling calm. Repeat until you have done it ten times OR use your own preferred relaxation technique.

Step 2:



Set the Scene—Visualize Yourself

Think: It is time for my exam. I **am** ready to go. I walk into the building where my test is being given. I arrive a few minutes early, and I have everything I need with me. I go to my classroom and sit down in my seat. I look up and see the instructor with the exams on the desk. (Keep calm and positive.)

Step 3:



Think your rational thoughts and visualize yourself remaining calm.

Think: I have prepared for this test. I have studied those areas I believe to be important. I will do the best I can on the test. If I run across questions I don't know, or am unsure of, I will just go on and return to them when I have answered those questions I **DO** know. I will keep calm and refuse to worry about what I don't or might not know, because when I worry, I make myself anxious. When I am anxious, I can't think clearly. I also waste time because when I worry, I can't be thinking about answers; only worry thoughts. By staying calm, I will be able to answer the questions I do know more quickly. This will allow me more time to think about and concentrate on those questions which I know less well. It is important that I do not panic and that I stay calm so that I can reason and think. That way, even if I don't know the answer to the question, I can at least make an "educated" guess. This will increase the likelihood that I will do well.

Step 4:



Imagine as vividly as possible—thinking, feeling, doing, and saying what you decide is rational.

Therefore: I will devote my full attention to the test now; knowing that I will give it my best shot and that's all I can expect of myself. If I start to worry, I will merely calm myself down with my relaxation exercise and re-think my rational thoughts. . When I have completed the test, I will refuse to worry about how I have done. I have done how I have done. Since I have studied, I probably have done quite well. Even if I have made mistakes, worrying about them won't change them. I will only make myself feel badly. No matter how I have done on the test, my test performance doesn't make me a good or bad person; for I am a Fallible

Human Being. If I make mistakes, I can learn from them and work at doing even better in the future.