Quick Tips for Reducing Test Anxiety

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Pre-Exam Strategies

- Replicate the testing environment as close as possible when studying.
- Make sample tests, take them in a quiet location, and apply time pressures to practice in the most effective manner.
- Meet with your professor and ask what material will be covered on the exam and what format it will be delivered in (multiple choice, matching, true/false, essay).
- Frequently review notes and assignments break up studying over the course of a few weeks compared to cramming the night before.
- Develop effective time-management and organization skills. The more prepared you are the less anxiety you will experience.

During Exam Strategies

- Recognize physical signs of stress early: sweaty palms, nausea, nervousness, etc. The first step in managing test anxiety is early recognition of physical symptoms of anxiety and understanding what each physical symptom means in terms of severity.
- Recognize mental signs of stress early: fear, dread, repetitive thoughts, confusion mental blocks etc., when experiencing this negative thoughts, counter them with positive rational thoughts.
- Go into the exam with a positive attitude about how you will do on the exam. Combat irrational negative thoughts with positive rational thoughts.
  - Irrational Thought: “Everyone must think I am stupid because I am always the last tester in the classroom.”
  - Rational Thought: “Others are not paying attention to me as they are worrying about their own exam.” “It is very common for students to take the entire time to complete an exam.”
- Create a “Test Anxiety Coping Plan.” Developing and knowing your coping plan will reduce the levels of stress associated with, not knowing what to do in that situation.
- When your mind is blank and you are experiencing “brain block,” it is important to keep your mind busy and active, but not focusing on something too complex. To help re-center your mind, pick a topic and list 10 things in that topic area, example: names, animals, sports, etc. Listing keeps the brain busy but not overworked.
- Deep breathing and muscle exercises can help focus your attention on your breathing and your body.
- When you get “stuck” on a question focus on questions that have the highest point total, answer the easiest questions first, and put a mark next to the “maybes.”