

Virginia Commonwealth University

Disability Support Services

TEST ANXIETY

Test anxiety, in and of itself, is **not** considered a disability for the purposes of academic accommodations. However, there are ways to prepare for tests, minimize your tests anxiety and be successful!

VCU's University Counseling Services (UCS) is an excellent resource to help you conquer test anxiety. UCS is located in the student commons building, room 238. They can also be reached by calling, (804) 828-6200.

What does test anxiety feel like?

- Some students experience physical symptoms, such as headaches, nausea, increased heart rate, difficulty breathing, faintness, and “blanking out.”
- Others may experience emotional symptoms, such as crying easily, feeling irritable or getting frustrated easily.
- The major problem caused by test anxiety is the effect on one's ability to think and concentrate. It can cause student's to blank out or have racing thoughts that are difficult to control.
- Although many students will experience a certain amount of anxiety when taking tests, most can cope with the anxiety and bring it down to a manageable level. When anxiety is so severe that students are unable to manage the anxiety, they may want to seek the services of UCS.

There may be no quick fix to the problem, but it is worth the effort. Some things that maybe helpful to you are:

- **Be well prepared!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**
 - If you are not prepared it is normal to feel anxious.
 - Have all items for the exam ready to go the night before, i.e. paper, pens, calculator.
 - If you need help, visit the tutoring or writing center in Hibbs Hall and get help. Make sure you get tutoring well before the day of the test.
- **Learn and use test taking strategies**
 - Think positively.
 - Don't talk to peers immediately before the exam.
 - Minimize distractions by seat location and use of ear plugs.
 - Carefully read exam instructions and/or directions.
 - Focus only on the exam while it is in progress.
- **Maintain a healthy lifestyle**
 - Get enough sleep.

- Eat with proper nutrition in mind.
- Avoid increasing anxiety before the test by eating sweets, or drinking caffeinated beverages.
- Drink plenty of water and exercise regularly.
- **Treat yourself to something enjoyable once the exam is over**
 - Watch a movie
 - Play a game
 - Read a book
 - Go out with friends
- **Additional Resources**
 - Muskingum College Learning Strategies Database: for students, the user-friendly format of the database makes it easy for users to assess their learning styles, to identify appropriate learning strategies to capitalize on strengths and compensate for deficiencies, and to become more responsible for their own learning. The link is www.muskingum.edu/~cal/database/general/
 - Dartmouth: This website includes 10-20 minute quick time videos that are free to view online and include useful, effective techniques for time-management, note-taking, reading rate and comprehension improvement, stress management and strategic learning.
<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~acskills/videos/index.html>
 - Louisiana State University's Center for Academic Success offers "online workshops" open to anyone. These workshops include tutorials on research based techniques for effective test preparation, time-management, note-taking and comprehension, overcoming test anxiety, college reading strategies and concept mapping. <http://appl003.lsu.edu/slas/lsoweb.nsf/index>
 - Utah State University's Academic Resource Center: offers an online learning center website with many links to various learning strategy resources including information about test anxiety.
http://www.usu.edu/arc/online_learning_center/
 - Watch, Practice. Learn: Learn almost anything for free. Browse this library of over 2,100 educational videos. Topics include math, science, economics, developmental math, finance and history. <http://www.khanacademy.org/>