

Some General Tips for Addressing Test Anxiety

- Ensure that anxiety is NOT a function of inadequate (or inappropriate) test preparation
- Don't cram just prior to an exam (e.g., sitting there waiting for the exam to be handed out). If you know the material, you know it. If you don't, you're likely to significantly increase your anxiety levels by engaging in this practice.
- Avoid (if possible) engaging in anxiety-producing pre-exam conversations with your anxiety-ridden colleagues.
- Review the entire exam before beginning to answer questions. Then take a deep breath. Then, gently, intentionally, begin your work.
- Monitor your anxiety levels throughout the testing situation. If anxiety starts to peak, take a break, and take a few deep breaths. Briefly close your eyes, if needed. When anxiety starts to drop some, resume working.
- Don't spend a lot of time worrying about other people's progress. They may finish before you, which is fine, in fact...
- Take the whole exam period to complete your work, or close to it. Your best work is likely to be done later in the session when early anxiety symptoms have largely dissipated. Rushing through an exam as a method of anxiety reduction (or avoidance) is likely to cause you some significant problems
- Take a break once in awhile, if needed. Go ask the instructor for clarification on a question, even if you don't necessarily need it. Sometimes a quick conversation will get you "outside of your own head" for a minute or two, which can help to combat anxiety symptoms.