

## Visualization

**Visualization** can be learned and practiced to improve the chances that you will be able to manage yourself with success before and during the test; thus, increasing chances of obtaining your desired grade. Visualize, or see yourself in your mind, (eyes closed helps), taking the test. See yourself sitting at your desk calmly and with confidence. Then see yourself receiving the test from your instructor. See yourself going through the test and answering each question with confidence and ease. Finally, visualize yourself completing the test and handing it in (this is similar to a self-fulfilling prophecy, but a positive one!!)

## VISUALIZE SUCCESS!

Think positive. Practice seeing yourself achieve the positive outcome you want, can result in a higher level of confidence and mental energy, with a decrease in stress level.

**Note: If you are having difficulties being able to visualize or see yourself in your mind, pretend you are in a movie theater watching yourself on the big screen. Same instructions as above, see yourself before, during, and after, completing each step of the test with patience, confidence, and success.**

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# MANAGING TEST ANXIETY

**The following suggestions and strategies will take practice. Don't give up just because something didn't work the first time. Know that you are not alone and that anxiety before or during an exam is common, especially for those who like to do well.**

- 1) Study and know the material the best you can prior to the test. Avoid cramming the night before. Your brain and body need sleep.
- 2) Avoid last minute cramming, especially right before the test. (stop studying at least 12 hours before taking an exam. This will help improve information recall during the test).
- 3) Tell yourself that you will do your best on the test and that will be enough!!
- 4) Remind yourself that the test is only a test and **not** a measure of your self-worth or ability to succeed in life. View the test as a "feedback mechanism" only...that's all it is.
- 5) During the test, focus on what's in front of you and not the final grade. Thinking about or worrying about the final grade can be distracting and can take away from you concentration. If your thoughts do go there, take a deep breath and bring your mind and thoughts back to the present.
- 6) Do something relaxing the last hour before the test. Gives your brain a chance to rest.

## Suggestions from College Students:

- 1) Don't consume caffeine before the test (can get light headed and jittery, which can escalate anxiety).
- 2) Don't listen to loud, energy producing music on your I-Pod before the test (can get your adrenaline going before you even sit down to take the test, which can also contribute to increased anxiety). If anything, listen to soft instrumental music or sounds (waves, rain, etc.).
- 3) Don't get caught up in classmates quizzing each other right before the test. This can increase your level of anxiety and self-doubt about the material. Trust that you already and adequately know what you know.
- 4) During the test... stay present...take short breaks if needed, or take time to pause every -so-often (do some abdominal breathing or get a drink of water).
- 5) Know that your body may experience some "pre-race jitters," which is normal. Don't fight the nervous energy you feel or misinterpret it by thinking that it is fear. The adrenaline rush you feel is normal and is part of your body's natural way to prepare you for action and doing your best (remember this especially before you give a speech or presentation, or preparing for a competition).
- 6) Go into the test reminding yourself that you're going to do the best you can.

## Practice Self-Care

- 1) Eat well, especially on test-day. Consume a good breakfast and lunch to increase energy.
- 2) Get enough sleep.
- 3) Exercise.
- 4) Have a balanced study schedule.
- 5) Strive for balance: DAILY
- 6) Positive thinking (throw out negative thoughts just like you would old furniture that has finished completing its purpose).
- 7) Mindfulness (take time to focus on breath several times a day...acknowledge and accept distracting thoughts and return your attention to your breath. Helps before and during exams too).

## Abdominal Breathing

**Abdominal breathing** can be used to help reduce anxiety. Place one hand on your abdomen, right beneath your rib cage. Inhale through your nose and feel your abdomen fill up like a balloon...count to three on your inhalation and then slowly exhale counting to four, feeling your abdomen contracting with the exhalation.

*You can practice this daily, just prior to the test, and even during the test to help relax your mind and body.*