

# TEST ANXIETY REDUCTION CHECKLIST

**Keep in mind that all students experience some level of anxiety before and/or during an exam. However, when anxiety affects exam performance, it should be addressed. Here is a checklist of things you can do to help manage test anxiety.**

## **Before a test:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Develop good study habits (your Support Advisor can help you with this). To schedule tutoring, go to [RCAS tutoring.com](http://RCAS tutoring.com).
- \_\_\_\_\_ Manage your time effectively (your Support Advisor can help you with this)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Organize material to be studied (your Support Advisor can help you with this)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Find out as many details as you can beforehand from your syllabi and faculty about test content and format, to limit surprises on test days
- \_\_\_\_\_ Study in steps (this can help it not become overwhelming):
  1. Go over class notes/study guides/practice tests as soon as possible after a test is announced and highlight items that are unclear to you.
  2. Discuss highlighted items with a classmate, tutor, or your faculty during office hours before the test.
  3. Schedule study time every day leading up to the test to gain confidence. Consecutive days of studying proves more effective than one night of cramming.
  4. Do practice problems, if applicable. It is one thing to easily grasp concepts as a professor is going through a problem, but the true test is the ability to work through a problem yourself.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Avoid classmates who do not see the importance of or who express negativity about being prepared for class/tests. Try to surround yourself with students who take studying seriously. The attitudes of others can impact you.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Exercise (even just a short walk) – get a decent night’s sleep – eat a light, healthy meal. These three things can help you stay alert and focused during studying and testing.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Arrive a few minutes early for your test, if possible. That way you’ll have some time for a quick review of your notes and won’t feel the pressure of running late.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Try to think of a test as an opportunity to succeed, not a chance to fail.

### **During the test:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Read the directions carefully. Circling or underlining significant words in the instructions can be helpful.
- \_\_\_\_\_ If you're not allowed a note sheet, quickly write out a few formulas and key ideas in the margin of the test as a reference.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Budget your time using the following steps:
  1. Answer questions worth the most points first.
  2. Next, move through all remaining questions that you are confident you can answer correctly.
  3. Answer the remaining questions as best you can, showing as much work as possible. Partial credit is better than no credit. Remember that if you go blank on a question, skip it and come back to it later.
  4. Once you've finished, check your answers if time allows.

### **If you find yourself getting anxious during a test:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Expect SOME anxiety. It's an energy that arises when you want to do your best and can be useful, if managed.
- \_\_\_\_\_ RELAX, YOU are in control. Close your eyes and take some slow, deep, breaths.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Don't fixate on fear. Pause and think about the next step only. Remember, STEP-BY-STEP.
- \_\_\_\_\_ IMPORTANT - When other students begin handing in their tests, don't worry. There is NO advantage to finishing a test quickly and it is NOT an indicator of how a student will score on a test.

### **After the test:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Congratulate yourself. You did it!
- \_\_\_\_\_ Review how you did:
  1. List what worked and hold onto those strategies. It does not matter how small the items are (it could be studying at a particular time of day, using a certain pencil during tests, or having a drink of water before you begin) – anything that worked can be used as a building block to help overcome your anxiety.
  2. List what did not work and think of replacement items/activities until you find the combination of steps that works for you.
  3. Communicate with your faculty. They want you to succeed.

**If you need help managing your test anxiety, there are resources in place. Here in the Wellness Center (Kern Center/K230/414-277-7590/wellnesscenter@msoe.edu) we have Mental Health Counselors and Student Support Advisors who can help you come up with strategies to prepare for tests and manage your anxiety. If you need a referral to a professional outside of MSOE, we can help with that as well.**