

Understanding & Overcoming
Test Anxiety

Presented by: The Academic
Success Center

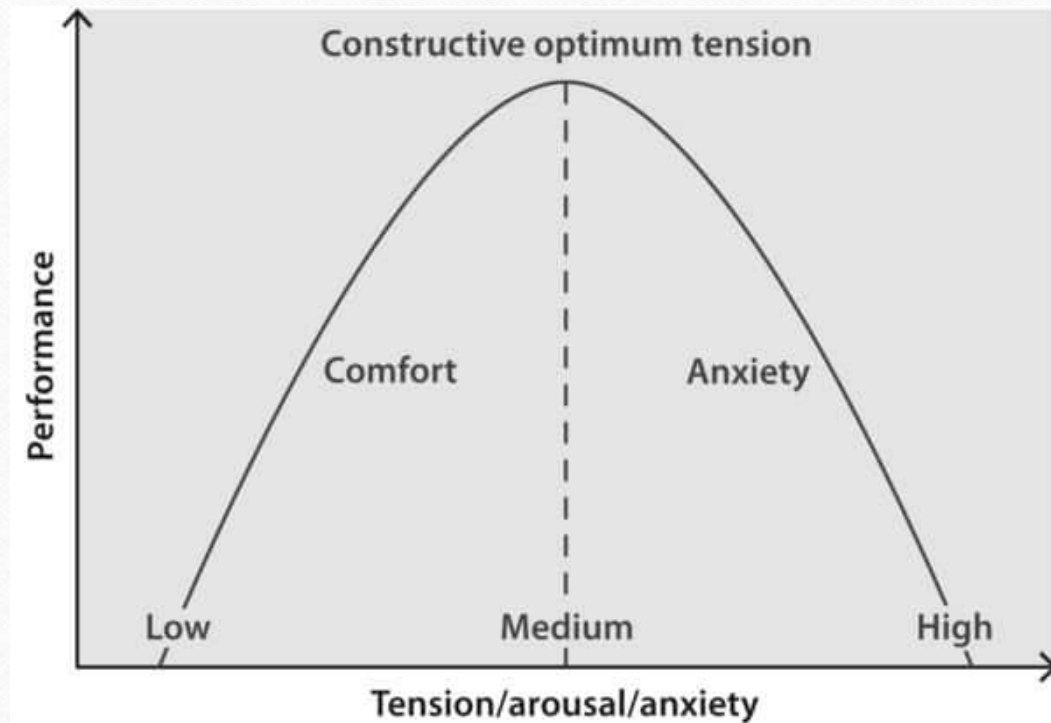
Overview

- ❖ What is Test Anxiety?
- ❖ Symptoms & Causes of Test Anxiety
- ❖ Overcoming Test Anxiety
- ❖ Q&A



What is Test Anxiety?

- ❖ Psychological condition where a person experiences stress & anxiety in testing situations.
- ❖ Can impair learning & test performance.
- ❖ A little nervousness helps, but don't over do it!



Test Anxiety Analogy

“Having test anxiety is like not having the password to your computer.

The information is there- you just can't get to it.”

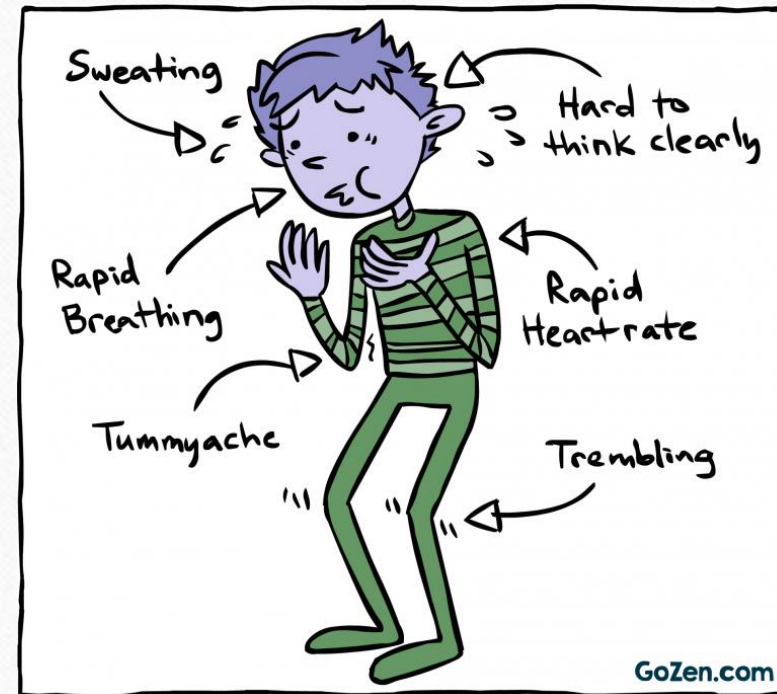


Measure your Text Anxiety

1. The closer a test date approaches the more nervous I get.
2. I am sometimes unable to sleep the night before a test.
3. I have “frozen up” during a test finding myself unable to think or respond.
4. I can feel my hands shaking as I pick up my pencil to begin a test.
5. The minute I read a tough test question all the facts I ever knew about the subject abandon me and I can’t get them back no matter how hard I try.
6. I have become physically ill before or during a test.
7. Nervousness prevents me from studying immediately before a test.
8. I often dream about an upcoming test.
9. Even if I successfully answer a number of questions my anxiety stays with me throughout the test.
10. I’m reluctant to turn in my test paper for fear I can do better if I continue to work on it.

Symptoms of Test Anxiety

- ❖ Physical Symptoms □ sweating, shaking, rapid breathing & heart rate, dry mouth, fainting, diarrhea, & nausea
- ❖ Cognitive & Behavioral Symptoms □ fidgeting, avoidance, substance abuse, blanking out, negative self-talk, trouble concentrating
- ❖ Emotional Symptoms □ depression, low self-esteem, anger, & feelings of hopelessness



Causes of Test Anxiety

- ❖ History of poor testing outcomes
- ❖ Being unprepared
- ❖ Being afraid of failure

How to recognize test anxiety...

- Procrastinating because you fear failure
- Fear that you will fail, if you have failed in the past
- Negative thoughts about doing well
- Blanking out or trouble concentrating during a test
- Nausea, sweating, racing heart, shortness of breath, or dizziness during a test

Activity

Make a list of the (5) best strategies for how to prepare for tests.



Overcoming Test Anxiety

- ❖ Make sure you're prepared (use the stress to your **ADVANTAGE!!!**)
- ❖ Stay positive!
- ❖ Practice self-care techniques (i.e. getting enough sleep)
- ❖ Avoid the perfectionist trap
- ❖ Develop good test taking & studying skills
- ❖ Recognize when you become anxious and take action
- ❖ Acknowledge why you might have test anxiety
- ❖ **ASK FOR HELP!**

Make sure you're prepared!

- Know what is expected of you
- What chapters will be covered?
- What format will the test be in?
- Where will the test be held?
- Do you need to bring anything on the day of the exam (e.g., a calculator, scrap paper, etc.)?

Stay positive!

- It's okay to have a bad day
- The important thing is to realize that good days exist
- When you learn to recognize the good days you can seize them and really appreciate them
- Don't bring yourself down by thinking you will fail; fake it until you make it!

Practice self-care

- Make time for yourself and the hobbies you love
- Eat well
- Exercise
- Sleep well
- Research ways to boost your immune system!
- Practice good hygiene – look good, feel good

Avoid the perfectionist trap!

- Accept that no one is perfect
- Instead, strive to be a better version of yourself
- Improving yourself takes time- notice the little improvements you make along the way
- Accept that success will not happen overnight
- Value your failures by learning from them

Develop good test-taking and studying skills.

- It's all about knowing what will help you integrate information better.
- Recognize what kind of learner you are
 - e.g., do you need more visuals to understand a concept or are you more of an auditory learner?
 - Maybe you need both kinds of input?
- Do you study better in isolation or with a group?
- Aim to improve your study skills with each test that you take

Recognize when you get anxious and take charge!

- Make note of your anxiety symptoms
- Research ways to counteract those feelings
- Find what works for you

Acknowledge why you have test anxiety.

- Identifying the cause of your test anxiety is the first step in tackling the problem
- Once you recognize why you are feeling anxious you can create steps to fix those feelings

Ask for help!

- It always helps to talk about it
- You may find that someone has a strategy that might work for you
- You are not alone

- Contact the Counseling, Health, and Wellness Center if you need someone to talk things through with
- The CHWC can help you find resources on campus that are right for you

Relaxation Techniques

- ❖ Deep breathing
- ❖ Progressive muscle relaxation
- ❖ Meditation
- ❖ Visualization
- ❖ Cooking/Baking
- ❖ Gardening
- ❖ Listening to music
- ❖ Coloring/Drawing/Painting
- ❖ Working out
- ❖ Hiking

Find what works for you.

Meditation Exercise!



Questions?