

## Getting Help

If you need assistance managing your test anxiety, you can contact the Campus Assistance Program (CAP), a free and **confidential** resource available to all faculty, staff, residents, students, and employees of LSUHSC.

**FOR MORE  
INFORMATION  
CALL  
(504) 568-8888**



## Managing Test Anxiety



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Prepared by the LSUHSC  
Campus Assistance Program  
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## Am I Experiencing Text Anxiety?

Most students experience some level of anxiety before or during a test, which can be a helpful motivating factor. However, when anxiety negatively affects test preparation and performance, it may require intervention. The following statements may help you determine if you need further assessment and/or assistance. Do any of these apply to you?

- The closer I am to a major exam, the harder it is for me to concentrate on the material.
- When I study for my exams, I worry that I will not remember the material on the exam.
- During important exams, I think that I am doing awful or that I may fail.
- I lose focus on important exams, and I cannot remember material that I knew before the exam.
- I finally remember the answer to exam questions after the exam is already over.
- I worry so much before a major exam that I am too worn out to do my best on the exam.
- I feel out of sorts or not really myself when I take important exams.
- I find that my mind sometimes wanders when I am taking important exams.
- After an exam, I worry about whether I did well enough.
- I struggle with written assignments, or avoid doing them, because I feel that whatever I do will not be good enough. I want it to be perfect.

Westside Test Anxiety Scale  
© 2004 by Richard Driscoll, Ph.D.

Visit <http://www.amtaa.org/scalewest.html> to obtain your score and determine if you would benefit from assistance.

## Preparing for a Test

There are many steps that you can take prior to a test in order to manage your anxiety:

- **Approach the test with confidence.** View the test as an opportunity to show how much you have learned and to receive a reward for your efforts. Practice optimism and visualize your success.
- **Plan ahead.** Be as prepared as possible by starting the studying process well in advance of the test. “Cramming” in the days or hours before the test can increase anxiety and be counterproductive.
- **Ask for help if you need it.** Participate in study groups. Hire a tutor. Meet with the professor to review any questions about the material.
- **Maintain a routine** in the days and weeks prior to the test that includes regular exercise, appropriate nutrition and adequate sleep. Deficiencies in these areas can affect your cognition and test performance.
- **Practice relaxation techniques.** Deep breathing, positive thinking strategies and meditation can be helpful in reducing chronic feelings of anxiety.



- **Avoid substances that can increase anxiety.** Alcohol, caffeine, nicotine and other substances can contribute to the physical and/or emotional manifestations of anxiety.
- **Eat a healthy meal on test day.** Avoid processed foods and sugar, and bring a healthy snack.
- **Arrive to the test location early.** Running late can add to your feelings of anxiety.
- **Strive for a relaxed state of concentration.** Avoid speaking with fellow students who have not prepared, who express negativity, or who will distract your preparation.

## During & After the Test

Keep the following things in mind while you are taking the test:

- **Reduce distractions.** If possible, choose a seat away from doors or high-traffic areas to take the test. Wear earplugs if random noises are bothersome.
- **Budget your test-taking time.** If you find yourself spending too much time on one question, move on.
- **Avoid comparing yourself to others.** Remember there is no reward for finishing first, so don't panic when other students finish before you.



If your anxiety level continues to be excessive, consider the following:

- **Make a commitment to yourself.** Understand that anxiety can be a habit, and it takes time and practice to develop your tools for success.
- **Consider your learning style.** Are you a sensory or intuitive learner? A visual or verbal learner? Research the strategies that will utilize your style to contribute to your success.
- **Learn test-taking skills.** Learn how to avoid making careless mistakes on multiple choice tests.
- **Continue practicing relaxation techniques.** The more you practice, the more it will become “second nature” to utilize the techniques when you need them the most.
- **Get professional assistance as needed.** Talk to a counselor or other healthcare professional for further assessment and assistance.