

# Reducing Test Anxiety

## **Before the Test:**

- *Study Effectively: Budget your time prior to the test to prepare sufficiently, do not cram*
  - *The right atmosphere*
  - *Develop a schedule*
  - *Make the most of your notes*
  - *Create learning aids*
- *Ask your teacher for practice tests or additional homework problems to practice skills*
- *When studying, give yourself study breaks*
  - *Move around, take a walk, listen to music*
- *Practice relaxation techniques,*
  - *Take deep breathes, stretch, take a drink of water*
- *Get a good night's sleep the night before the exam*
- *Eat moderate breakfast or lunch, avoid caffeine and excessive sugar*
- *Show up 5 minutes before the exam, professors sometimes give last minute hints or clues*
- *Avoid fellow students who get tense before the exam*
- *Arrive prepared and positive, visualize success*

## **During the Test:**

- *Put into practice helpful test taking techniques (see handout Smart Test Taking Techniques)*
- *Psych yourself down before the test: too much arousal before the test can make it hard to concentrate and focus. Try the techniques below to help control your reactions to the stress of taking a test.*
  - *Take a few deep breaths before the exam begins. "cool air in, warm air out"*
  - *Alternate tensing & relaxing large muscle groups*
- *Practice relaxation techniques throughout the exam when feeling anxious*
- *Take one step at a time- break your test into small, manageable parts*
  - *Bring a watch to manage time correctly*
- *Control negative and anxious thoughts. Tell yourself "I can be anxious later, now is the time to take the test". Focus on present moment, not on worries about grade.*
- *Try to keep a positive attitude throughout the whole test*
- *Do easy problems first, skip problems you are unsure of and come back to it*
- *Ask the instructor for clarification on questions you do not understand*
- *Don't worry if others finish before you, focus on the test in front of you*
- *Look over the test when finished, make sure all questions are answered, use full time allowed*

## **After the Test:**

- *Reward yourself*
- *Communicate with your instructor about your test anxiety*
- *If you are not satisfied with your grade, speak with your instructor to see if there's a make-up exam or any extra credit*
- *Learn from your experience taking this test*
  - *What worked? What didn't work? Do you need new study techniques?*

# Smart Test-Taker Techniques

## **True-False Questions:**

- *Watch out for qualifiers*
  - *The 100% words: all, none, always, only, never, best*
  - *The non-extreme words: seldom, sometimes, often, frequently, most, many, few, some, usually, generally, ordinarily*
- *Check each part of the sentence*
  - *If any part is false, the whole sentence is false*
- *Beware of negative prefixes or words (Anti-, Dis-, Ir-, Non-, Un-)*
- *Guess when you must, never leave answers blank*

## **Multiple Choice Questions:**

- *Read directions carefully*
- *Try guessing the answer without looking at the possible answers*
- *Skip the questions you don't know*
- *Underline/circle the negative and extreme words in questions*
- *Eliminate impossible/foolish answers FIRST, if you are unsure of the correct answer, rely on your first impression and move on.*
- *Look at each answer separately with the given questions*
- *Determine if the answer is relevant to course material*
- *Check for answers that are close in nature*
- *Inclusive and long answers may provide more clues*
- *Two answers are good but only ONE IS BEST*

## **Essay/Short Answers:**

- *Outline ideas before writing, this will help avoid "rambling" and repetition.*
- *Read all questions first – and key words such as "summarize" or "compare".*
- *Use transition words (First, Second, In addition, In summary, In conclusion)*
- *Proofread at the end*