



# Test Anxiety

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*Relax, It's Just The Rest of Your Life*

# When is Test Anxiety a Problem?

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- Test anxiety belongs to a wider phenomenon called performance anxiety
- The experience of anxiety during high-stakes testing is normal and natural
- It can help motivate you to arrive prepared and ready for the real challenges that await
- Test anxiety is a problem when it begins to negatively impact performance

# Mental Signs of Test Anxiety

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- Blanking out
- Racing thoughts
- Difficulty concentrating
- Anger, depression, feelings of helplessness
- Negative thoughts about past performance, consequences of failure, or how you are performing relative to others around you
- Knowing the answers after the test, but not while taking it

# Physical Signs of Test Anxiety

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- Fidgeting
- Nausea
- Cramps
- Light-headedness
- Excessive sweating
- Headache
- Dry mouth
- Shortness of breath
- Rapid heartbeat
- Muscle tension

# Basic Causes of Test Anxiety

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- Genetics
- Negative past experiences with taking tests, including poor performance
- Inadequate mastery of material being covered
- Negative thoughts, including lack of confidence and fear of failure
- Belief in test-taking myths (*magical thinking*)

# General Guidelines

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- Prepare for your exams in advance
- Get a good night's sleep
- Avoid high levels of sugar and caffeine
- Arrive early for exam
- Breathe, relax, and imagine yourself confident and in control
- If there something on the exam you cannot answer immediately, come back to it

# Relaxation Techniques

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- Autogenic relaxation
- Progressive muscle relaxation
- Visualization

# Autogenic Relaxation

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- Repeat a set of visualizations that induce a state of relaxation



# Progressive Muscle Relaxation

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- Alternately tensing and relaxing muscle groups



# Visualization

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- Picturing yourself in a situation or place that induces a state of relaxation



# Online Spaces for Relaxation

Lime.com

## meditationroom



### spaceroom

Abandon your current circumstances, explore the mysteries of the cosmos, and find yourself.

 [download for iPod](#) | [subscribe at iTunes](#)

[Click here to launch the room.](#)



### winterroom

Need a mid-day escape? Spend a few calming minutes in our winter wonderland.

 [download for iPod](#) | [subscribe at iTunes](#)

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### floralroom

The floralroom surrounds you with a breath of green and a brush of dew against your skin. Lose yourself in lush roses, curved orchids, and the dark faces of sunflowers.

 [download for iPod](#) | [subscribe at iTunes](#)

[Click here to launch the room.](#)

# Quick Start Guide to Meditation

Mayo Clinic

## Video: Need to relax? Take a break to meditate



### TRANSCRIPT

Need a few minutes to relax?

Get comfortable in your chair. Loosen any tight, uncomfortable clothing. Let your arms rest loosely at your side. Allow yourself a few moments to relax.

If your thoughts wander, just let them while gently moving your attention back to the relaxation. If you become anxious or uncomfortable, stop the relaxation by clicking on the pause button.

To begin, focus your eyes on the candle flame. Notice its simplicity.

# Overcoming Fear of Failure

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- Recognize the behavior or thought pattern you would like to change
- Identify your triggers
- Explore your beliefs
- Replace irrational beliefs with more realistic ones
- Develop an alternative behavior in response to your triggers

# Is My Behavior Maladapted?

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- Use Five Rational Questions to Decide What's in Your Best Interest
  - Is my behavior/belief based on fact?
  - Does my behavior/belief help me protect my life and health?
  - Does my behavior/belief help me achieve my goals now and in the future?
  - Does my behavior/belief help me avoid unwanted conflict with others?
  - Does my behavior/belief help me feel the way I want to without drugs or alcohol?

# If Anxiety Persists or Gets Worst

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- You may want to make an appointment to speak with a professional in the Drexel Counseling Center, (215) 895-1415
- It's free and confidential