

A FEW TIPS FOR COPING WITH TEST ANXIETY

As you can guess, the best tip for coping with test anxiety is to attend classes and keep up with assignments and reading throughout the term. However, if you've let things get behind, here are some essentials to get you through finals!

- 1) Try not to pull "all nighters" as you wind up draining energy and perhaps depleting mental resources at test time. A good night's sleep can be your best bet.
- 2) When you do study, allow yourself to feel confident that you are absorbing information you will be able to retain and draw upon when necessary. After all, you are an intelligent human being!
- 3) Make sure you have eaten a well balanced meal or snack before a test. And remember: too much protein or too large a meal can leave you feeling dull and tired. Too much sugar or caffeine can make you too jittery to think straight.
- 4) Take some time just before your test to calm yourself. Test anxiety can be greatly reduced (and brain function enhanced) by taking a few moments to breathe slowly and deeply. Surround yourself with a mental image of quiet confidence as you breathe in refreshing oxygen and breathe out tension. Give yourself a silent suggestion such as, "I am calm and in control. I am refreshed and alert. I am ready to do well on this test."

Remember, BE POSITIVE! Now, GO FOR IT!

Foncy Prescott
Stress Management Peer Health Advisor

HOW NOT TO HANDLE STRESS

"Let's go have a drink and relax." How often do we hear this on campus? There's no denying college students lead stressful lives. There are the pressures of midterms and finals, of money, of meeting new people and the unknown future after college. So, all around us people are using alcohol to relax, to party, to forget and to have a good time.

Unfortunately, alcohol is not the best way to relax and get rid of that stress. Alcohol actually adds stress to your body. It makes the liver work harder, acts as a depressant on your mind and can be toxic when taken in large quantities or mixed with other drugs.

So be aware that drinking doesn't necessarily mean relaxing!

Some delicious non-alcoholic drinks:

8 oz. glass filled with ice

Add 3/4 diet 7 UP

1/4 splash of orange juice

Perrier and a slice of lime

Kingsbury non-alcoholic beer

Pam Trapp
Substance Abuse Peer Health Advisor

MANAGING STRESS TO MANAGE YOUR GRADES

An article in the Journal of College Student Personnel has some interesting implications for low-achieving college students. John M. Williams and Thomas W. Decker studied a group of freshman and sophomores who were on academic probation. Williams and Decker found that combining stress reduction techniques with time management and goal setting significantly reduced stress, and also improved the students' GPAs.

Students with low GPAs have been shown to experience more anxiety than high-achieving students. Williams and Decker believed that it was important to address this anxiety with a number of techniques. Thus they split students into two groups in their study: those who would receive only goal setting and time management training, and those who would receive goal setting, time management and also stress reduction training.

The results of the study are interesting. The stress reduction group experienced less stress at the end of a 15 week semester than those who only received goal setting and time management training. The stress reduction group had an increase in their average GPA from a pretraining 1.01 to a followup 2.04. The group receiving only time management and goal setting increased from a pretraining 1.13 to a followup 1.32. The stress reduction group's GPA average increase from a D to a C may have been caused by other factors. However, it might be valuable for students struggling with low grades to learn some stress management techniques along with goal setting and time management.

Mike Gieseler
Stress Management Peer Health Advisor

COMPONENTS OF PROPER BREATHING

1. Diaphragmatic
2. Smooth- no jerks or irregularities
3. Constant- no pauses between inhalation and exhalations
4. Exhalations are longer than inhalations- 2:1
5. Posture is straight and comfortable
6. Regular rhythm
7. Deep
8. Slow
9. Silent
10. Gentle