

## Tips for Managing Your Stress

*Stress is a fact of life - being stressed out does not have to be  
Try some of the following to manage your stress differently*

- ✚ **Acknowledge where your stress is coming from** ... internal ... external
- ✚ **Acknowledge your strengths** ..... you have many
- ✚ **Evaluate your expectations** ..... are they set too high or are they unrealistic
- ✚ **Set realistic goals for yourself** ..... goals can get you back on track
- ✚ **Have a plan for the day** ..... get organised, manage your time, prioritise
- ✚ **Take five** ..... schedule in some quiet time during the day, take a break both mentally and physically
- ✚ **Eat well** ... Strive to have a balanced diet. Avoid increased use of sugar, alcohol, caffeine
- ✚ **Get plenty rest** ..... set a time for going to bed, improve your night-time routine, wind down after the day
- ✚ **Take regular exercise** .... Physical exercise is a great way of de-stressing
- ✚ **Build up your relaxation practises** .... Deep breathing, relax your face, unclench your teeth, relax your brow, take a stretch, listen to music
- ✚ **Take note of how you talk to yourself** ..... avoid statements like 'I must' or 'I should' ..... change them to 'I can' or 'I will try' or 'I am'
- ✚ **Scale your stress from 1 – 10** with '1' being the best and '10' being the worst. Despite what we think our stress is not always at a 10.
- ✚ **Keep a diary** .... Keep note of the good things that happen as well as the difficulties. Revisiting this can give you a boost when feeling stressed.
- ✚ **Seek support** ... socially and professionally. It is o.k. to ask for help.
- ✚ **Finally ... Reward yourself** ..... remember ...as the ad says ...

*'You're Worth It'*

# Overcoming test anxiety

## **Most students experience some level of anxiety during an exam**

However, when anxiety affects exam performance it has become a problem.

## **General preparation/building confidence:**

Review your personal situation and skills

- Developing good study habits and strategies
- Managing time  
(dealing with procrastination, distractions, laziness)
- Organizing material to be studied and learned  
Take a step by step approach to build a strategy and not get overwhelmed
- Outside pressures  
success/failure consequences (grades, graduation), peer pressure, competitiveness, etc.
- Reviewing your past performance on tests  
to improve and learn from experience

## **Test preparation to reduce anxiety:**

- **Approach the exam with confidence:**  
Use whatever strategies you can to personalize success: visualization, logic, talking to yourself, practice, team work, journaling, etc.  
View the exam as an opportunity to show how much you've studied and to receive a reward for the studying you've done
- **Be prepared!**  
Learn your material thoroughly and organize what materials you will need for the test.  
Use a checklist & use past exam papers
- **Allow yourself plenty of time,**  
especially to do things you need to do before the test and still get there a little early
- **Avoid thinking you need to cram just before**
- **Strive for a relaxed state of concentration**  
Avoid speaking with any fellow students who have not prepared, who express negativity, who will distract your preparation
- **A program of exercise**  
is said to sharpen the mind
- **Get a good night's sleep**  
the night before the exam
- **Don't go to the exam with an empty stomach**  
Fresh fruits and vegetables are often recommended to reduce stress.  
Stressful foods can include processed foods, artificial sweeteners, carbonated soft drinks, chocolate, eggs, fried foods, junk foods, pork, red meat, sugar, white flour products, chips and similar snack foods, foods containing preservatives or heavy spices
- **Take a small snack, or some other nourishment**  
to help take your mind off of your anxiety.  
Avoid high sugar content (sweets) which may aggravate your condition

### **During the test:**

- Read the directions carefully
- Budget your test taking time
- Change positions to help you relax
- If you go blank, skip the question and go on
- If you're taking an essay test and you go blank on the whole test, pick a question and start writing. It may trigger the answer in your mind
- Don't panic when students start handing in their papers. There's no reward for finishing first

### **Use relaxation techniques**

#### **If you find yourself tensing and getting anxious during the test:**

#### **Relax; you are in control.**

Take slow, deep breaths

#### **Don't think about the fear**

Pause: think about the next step and keep on task, step by step

#### **Use positive reinforcement for yourself:**

Acknowledge that you have done, and are doing, your best

#### **Expect *some* anxiety**

It's a reminder that you want to do your best and can provide energy

Just keep it manageable

#### **Realize that anxiety can be a "habit"**

and that it takes practice to use it as a tool to succeed

#### **After the test, review how you did**

- List what worked, and hold onto these strategies  
It does not matter how small the items are: they are building blocks to success
- List what did not work for improvement
- Celebrate that you are on the road to overcoming this obstacle