



## What Causes Test Anxiety?

- Prior negative test-taking experiences
- Pressure of timed tests
- Surprise of timed tests
- Discomfort of testing in a group setting
- Worry about how anxiety will affect test taking ability
- Increased worry as the testing situation approaches
- Fear of failure
- Lack of confidence
- Lack of Preparation
- Unreasonable goals
- Poor time and study habits
- Inability to anticipate what the exam will cover.

# Student Test Anxiety

[Counseling and Wellness services](#)

Wellness Center Email: [cws@ewu.edu](mailto:cws@ewu.edu).

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## What are the symptoms?

### Physical

- Headaches
- Nausea
- Diarrhea
- Rapid heart rate
- Panic
- Extreme body temperature changes
- Excessive sweating
- Shortness of breath
- Trembling
- Light headed / fainting
- Dry Mouth
- Difficulty Sleeping

### Behavioral

- Fidgeting
- Pacing
- Avoidance

### Cognitive

- Racing thoughts
- Mind going blank
- Difficulty concentrating
- Difficulty organizing
- Negative self-talk
- Comparing self to others

### Emotional

- Excessive fear
- Disappointment
- Depression
- Anger
- Uncontrollable crying or laughing
- Feelings of helplessness
- Feelings of dread

## You're not alone.

- Approximately 16 - 20% of students have high test anxiety.
- Another 18% of students deal with moderate test anxiety
- Even the best students can struggle with test anxiety. There are typically two types of students who are likely to have trouble with test anxiety. The high achieving student, a student with high expectations of themselves, and the underprepared student, not properly prepared for the a test.



# Tips for Reducing Test Anxiety

## Develop Good Habits

- Preparation
- Develop good study habits
- Spread studying over several days
- Eat nutritious foods
- Get adequate sleep
- Exercise to release tension and build energy
- Attend class regularly
- Complete all assignments
- Make and take practice tests
- Learn how to take different types of tests
- Review prior homework and test
- Ask for help from the instructor, friend, family, peers and / or mentor

## Manage the Fear

- The underlying source of test or performance anxiety is the fear of failure.
- Pay attention to what you are thinking and saying to yourself in anxious situations
- Change your self-talk; self-talk will likely reflect an expectation including fear of failure
- Normalize set-backs

## Practice a Positive Attitude

- Develop reasonable expectations
- Do not allow your grades to become dependent on one exam
- Avoid negative and irrational thoughts about catastrophic results
- Reward yourself for dedicated studying
- Encourage yourself

## On Task Self-talk

- Counter distractions and help yourself focus on the task at hand
- Talk yourself through the task
- Tell yourself you are succeeding
- Keep your mind focused on the present
- One thing at a time

## Be Prepared

- Practice, practice, practice
- Study, study, study
- Improve your study and test taking skills
- Have all the tools
- Try not to hurry
- Don't arrive too early or too late
- Ignore others in the room
- Eat a healthy snack and drink water before the test
- Learn and practice anxiety management techniques

## Use Relaxation Techniques

- Deep Breathing exercises
- Imagery and visualization
- Deep muscle relaxation techniques

## Always Remember

- When you are physically and emotionally exhausted, your body and mind are less able to tolerate stress and anxiety.
- Get adequate rest
- Eat appropriately
- Don't have time? Get help with time management

