

How to Keep Calm During Tests

1. **Prepare well in advance.** Keep up day-to-day, if you can; but don't judge yourself harshly if you don't. Avoid last minute cramming. Don't go without sleeping the night before (though 4 or 5 hours may be enough). Stop studying an hour or so before the test and relax and compose yourself.
2. **Know time and place** of the test and what you need to bring. Be on time, neither too early or too late, with "blue books" or supplies. Don't rush.
3. **Don't talk about the test** with classmates immediately beforehand, if you know it raises your anxiety level. To do so may nourish group paranoia.
4. Read over the test and **plan your approach.** Ascertain point values per part, time limits for each session, which question you'll start with, etc.
5. Don't hesitate to **ask for clarification** from the professor, teaching assistant, or proctor if you have questions about directions, procedures, etc., rather than letting anxiety build up because you aren't sure about what you are expected to do.
6. **Develop an aggressive, yet realistic attitude.** Approach the test vigorously determined that you will do your best; but also accept the limits of what you know at the moment. Use everything you know to do well; but don't blame yourself for what you don't know.
7. **Activity reduced anxiety.** If you go blank and can't think of anything to write, go on to another question or another part of the test. On an essay jot down anything you can recall on scratch paper to stimulate your memory and get your mind working.
8. **Relax yourself physically** during the test if you notice that you are not thinking well or are tight. Pause, lay your test aside, and take several slow, deep breaths. Concentrate on your breathing. Do this if you notice that you are worrying excessively about one problem, not reading carefully, or forgetting information you know.
9. **Pay attention to the test**, not to yourself or others. Don't waste time worrying, doubting yourself, wondering how others are doing, etc. Don't worry about what you should have done; pay attention to what you can do now.