OVERCOMING
TEST ANXIETY

Adapted from 12 Steps by Barry Zwibelman, Ph.D.
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Before The Test

1. Use a study schedule to avoid
the feeling of being rushed.
2. Rehearse for success→ Give
yourself pre-tests to find out
exactly what you know and don’t
know.
3. Learn and practice deep
breathing. (The brain requires 25
percent of your total oxygen intake . . .
see right panel).
4. Turn threats into challenges:
“This is hard . . . but I’m going to
figure out how to do it.”

5. Have fun with studying. Make up
a test "game routine".
6. Redirect irrational fears of
failure -- don’t think that one
test will ruin your life. It’s just
a test.
7. Use mental images that create
calmness and confidence.

During The Test

8. Arrive early so you have time to
do a relaxation exercise.
9. Think positive thoughts:
“I know how to stay on track.”
“I know how to stay calm, even if I get
one wrong.”
10. Give yourself permission to do
the best you can under the
circumstances.
11. Don’t think about what your
grade will be. Don’t think about
how others are doing. Just
focus on one question at a time.
12. Stress can play tricks with your
. . Stretch some muscles
periodically during the test.

BREATHE SLOW AND DEEP,
NOT
RAPID AND SHALLOW

When under stress, most
people tend to breathe in
short, shallow breaths.
Check your breathing. If you
are breathing in a rapid,
shallow manner, relax all your
muscles and take several deep,
slow breaths.

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