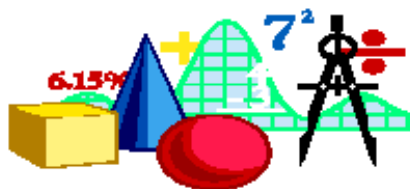


---

## OVERCOMING TEST ANXIETY

---



Adapted from 12 Steps by Barry Zwibelman, Ph.D.  
University of Miami Counseling Services, Coral  
Gables, FL

### 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 memory. **Relax.** Breathe deeply. . . **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.

**VCU University Counseling Services**  
Division of Student Affairs & Enrollment  
Services  
(804) 828-6200 Monroe Park  
(804) 828-3964 MCV Campus