

Finding Calm in the Eye of the Storm: Preparing for Exams

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Feeling nervous before an exam is a relatively common feeling for students of all ages, and a small bit of nerves can even help to focus your mind. However, intense anxiety can be disastrous for test takers. It can be challenging to be clam when you are worried about a test, but if you follow these simple tips, you should be able to find the calm in the eye of the storm:

1. Avoid Caffeine

You may think that you can't live without your morning cup of coffee, but when you add caffeine to nerves, it can make you jumpy and jittery. If you can't avoid caffeine totally, try having less than normal, and definitely make the second cup decaf.

2. Morning Yoga

A few stretches combined with a few moments of silence is just what you need before a test. When you wake up on exam morning, try doing a few sun salutations. These simple exercises will relax your body and calm your mind.

3. Rest

It is tempting to stay up all night studying, but lack of sleep wrecks havoc on the memory. Turn in early, the night before your exam. If you have distractions in your home

that make it difficult to sleep like noisy roommates, try using earplugs to ensure that you get a restful night's sleep.

4. Slow Morning

Rushing the morning of the test can make you feel nervous or upset. Set your alarm early so that you will have ample time to prepare to leave the house in the morning. If possible, lay out everything that you need the night before your exam. If you have your books, clothes, and car keys ready, you won't have to waste time looking for them in the morning, and it will help things to go smoothly and slowly.

5. Breakfast

They say that breakfast is the most important meal of the time, and even if you never eat breakfast, try having some on test day. A bit of protein in the morning will give your brain a jump start, and it will ensure that you don't get distracted by hunger during the test. If you absolutely can't eat breakfast, pack a granola bar in your pocket so that you have a snack when you need one.

6. Always Be Prepared

The more prepared you are for your exam, the easier it will be to take. Rather than cramming in a ton of last minute studying, spend several days or weeks studying. This will give the information a chance to really sink in. Even the brightest student will lose information if they cram. Knowing that you are prepared for any questions that the instructor might throw your way will go a long way toward calming your nerves.

7. Pretest

If you find that you have a lot of test anxiety, it may help you to take a pretest. Simulate the conditions of the exam room as closely as possible and write a test for yourself. Knowing that you can pass a pretest will soothe your fears greatly on the day of the exam.

8. Acknowledge Your Learning Disabilities

If you have a learning disability, test taking can be even more nerve wrecking. Instead of trying to tackle this on your own, acknowledge your learning disability and talk to your teacher about your options. Depending on the nature of your learning disability and the rules at your institution, you may be able to take an un-timed test, and if you have dyslexia, you may even be able to get a reader to read the questions to you.

8. Establish a Consistent Routine

Every test is different, but your pretest routine should be the same. Following the same set of actions each morning before your test will help to soothe and relax you.

9. A Moment of Silence

Before your test, close your eyes for a moment of silence. This will help to sharpen and focus your mind.

10. Visual Success

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Do not think about failing your exam. Instead, visual success. If you arrive at your exam feeling calm and confident, you will get a better grade than if you arrive feeling nervous and jittery.