



# WebSource

For the Classroom

## College and Career Readiness: Managing Test Anxiety

### Discussion Questions

- How do you prepare for a test?
- How do you feel before taking a test?
- How do you feel while taking a test?

### Activity: Relaxation Techniques

Students will rehearse different techniques to manage test anxiety.

#### PROCEDURE

1. Continue the discussion by explaining to students that a little nervousness before a test is normal and may actually sharpen your mind and focus your attention. Yet, feelings of anxiety and self-doubt can also interfere with your test-taking performance and abilities. Of course, the best approach is to study and be prepared for the exam at hand. That said, techniques can help us relax and re-focus. Let's give a few a try:
2. **Positive Self-Talk:** This helps you tap your inner strength. Let's think of some examples of positive messages we can send: I am good at \_\_\_\_\_. I have prepared for this and will focus my attention. I can do this!
3. **Deep breathing:** Breathe in through the nose and let the air fill the bottom of your lungs first, breathe right down to your stomach, then breathe out slowly, concentrating on letting the muscles of your body relax.
4. **Focused breathing:** Breathe in through the nose and as you breathe out say a positive statement to yourself like "relax" or "calm down".
5. **Stretching:** Before an exam begins, take a moment to stretch out muscles, reach the arms above the head and stretch, or just stretch whatever part of the body you feel needs it. Let's give it a try, but remain quiet and focused.
6. **Visualization** – Picture a pleasant place, somewhere you like to be and where you feel comfortable and safe. Use slow breathing through your nose, shut your eyes and picture yourself in that place.
7. **Simple Meditation** – Start by getting comfortable and aware of your breathing. Breathe in, breathe out, breathe in, and breathe out. Start to count after each breath. Breath in, breath out, one, breath in, breath out, two, breath in, breath out, three – up to ten. Then start again. If you lose count, return to one. Do this just for a few minutes to calm yourself and focus your concentration.

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8. Conclude the discussion by asking if any of the techniques in particular resonate. Does anyone feel more relaxed following the breathing exercises? Suggest that students try some of these techniques throughout the day, even when there is not a test looming.