

Symptoms of Test Anxiety

How do you know you are suffering from test anxiety? Often, you will experience a combination of cognitive, physical, and emotional symptoms.

COGNITIVE SYMPTOMS

Cognitive symptoms refer to disruptions in thought processes like learning, memory, comprehension and reasoning skills. These symptoms can include

- Negative self-talk
- Racing thoughts
- Negative comparison of yourself with other students
- Difficulty concentrating
- Difficulty remembering material during the exam that you studied (going “blank”)

PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS

Physical symptoms refer to signs that your body is affected by anxiety-caused stress. Physical symptoms of test anxiety may include:

- Sweating
- Light-headedness
- Headache
- Nausea
- Diarrhea
- Rapid heart rate
- Muscle tension
- Shortness of breath

EMOTIONAL SYMPTOMS

Emotional symptoms refer to disturbances of your emotions and feelings. While it is normal to experience heightened emotions before and during a test, emotional symptoms of test anxiety are often abnormal and disproportionate, and may include:

- Fear
- Anger
- Frustration
- Helplessness

References

Albert Einstein College of Medicine Office of Academic Support and Counseling