

Test Preparation

One of the biggest causes of test anxiety in students is inadequate preparation. This is a cause that can best be addressed by starting at the beginning of your courses and carrying through with some good habits.

BEFORE THE TEST

- ❑ **Improve your time management.** Create a calendar to organize all your assignments and tests. Include your reading assignments, and block out time to complete them. Practicing good time management can help you combat the stress of having too much to do at one time, and can help reduce your test anxiety.
- ❑ **Develop good study habits.** Learn to study smarter by organizing and prioritizing what you need to know. Don't wait to ask for help if you are struggling. Ask for a consultation on study skills and test taking strategies if you don't think your preparation was adequate.
- ❑ **Take practice tests.** Practice tests are a great way to clarify what you know and don't know. If practice tests aren't available, make your own by creating questions from the material. If possible, partner up with another student and check your knowledge against questions they have created.
- ❑ **Learn as much about the test as you can.** It is helpful to know ahead of time how many and what type of questions will be on the test, how they are scored, and how much time you will have. Eliminating elements of the unknown can help reduce your level of anxiety.

THE NIGHT BEFORE

- ❑ **Don't cram the night before an exam.** If you have studied well up to the night before the exam, you shouldn't need to study the night before beyond a review to prime your memory.
- ❑ **Get enough sleep so your brain can work.** Actually, lack of sleep can make you less mentally sharp and hurt your test performance, so sleeping, rather than cramming, is more beneficial.