

Top 10 Tips to End Test Anxiety:

1. **Prepare Thoroughly and Early:** Lack of preparation is a major cause of anxiety. Start reviewing material well in advance, break study sessions into manageable, focused chunks, and avoid last-minute cramming. This builds confidence in your knowledge.
2. **Practice Test Conditions:** Familiarize yourself with the exam format and take practice tests under timed, simulated testing conditions. This helps desensitize your brain to the pressure and improves your recall under stress.
3. **Prioritize Self-Care:** Ensure you get 7-9 hours of quality sleep in the days leading up to the exam. Your brain needs rest for optimal memory and focus. On test day, eat a healthy, balanced breakfast, and avoid excessive caffeine and sugar which can heighten anxiety.
4. **Practice Relaxation Techniques:** Learn and regularly use deep breathing exercises (like box or diaphragmatic breathing) or progressive muscle relaxation. If you feel anxiety rising before or during the test, take a quick break to center yourself with these techniques.
5. **Challenge Negative Thoughts:** Replace negative self-talk ("I'm going to fail," "I'm not smart enough") with positive, evidence-based affirmations ("I have prepared well," "I can do this," "My worth is not defined by this one score").
6. **Use Positive Visualization:** Before the test, close your eyes and mentally rehearse walking confidently into the room, answering questions with ease, and leaving the exam feeling proud of your effort.
7. **Arrive Early and Get Settled:** Being rushed will spike anxiety. Arrive ahead of time to find your seat, organize your materials, and take a few minutes to breathe and relax before the exam begins.

8. **Employ Smart Test-Taking Strategies:** When the test starts, review the entire test and directions carefully. Start by answering the questions you know first to build momentum. Skip difficult questions and come back to them later to avoid getting stuck.
9. **Engage in Regular Physical Activity:** Regular exercise, like running, walking, or yoga, is a powerful stress reducer. Taking a short walk before a test can help release nervous energy.
10. **Keep Perspective and Seek Support:** Remind yourself that one test will not determine your entire future. If your anxiety feels overwhelming, talk to a teacher, counselor, or mental health professional for resources and tailored coping strategies.

Bonus Tip: Gum or Peppermints

Increased Alertness: Chewing gum raises heart rate and blood pressure, sending more blood to the brain and increasing alertness.

Improved Cognitive Function: Research indicates gum chewing can lead to enhanced working memory, episodic memory, and processing speed.

Memory Boost: In one study, the group that chewed gum before the test recalled significantly more items during the first 15-20 minutes compared to the control group