

5 Great Strategies For Dealing With Test Anxiety

Too often, students walk in to a math test well prepared and don't leave with the result they deserved; the culprit is very often test anxiety. Here are some great strategies for students to use to combat test-anxiety, from one of our amazing MHS teachers - Carol James at Westwood Junior High School

1 - Take a moment before opening the test to breathe deeply and "go to your happy place (the beach, a favourite family vacation spot, home on the couch etc.)"....seems hokey but studies have shown that it helps! While breathing, put your hand on your stomach to make sure you feel your hand moving in and out. This makes sure that you are breathing abdominally (or belly-breathing), which helps counteract any stress you may be feeling.

2 - You don't have to do the test in order - find the first question that seems easy and do that one first - experiencing success helps get over the stress hurdle. The Short Answer problems are usually the most straight forward; no tricks, not many words, not many steps. Do those first.

3 - MC questions are not always the easiest ones - even though the answer is there, so is the answer of the most common mistake so be careful. Don't change MC answers unless you are SURE you made a mistake - first choice is usually your best.

4 - Take mini-breaks; roll your neck, move your shoulders tense & relax your fingers etc.- these are all stress releasing techniques.

5 - Put your pencil down and take a moment to THINK before starting to work (especially on the longer word problems). Have an idea of the general direction you need to go in (I call this the map - you wouldn't drive to a new city without first checking to see what direction you need to go in, what highway you need to take etc.). Don't worry about others who seem to be madly writing - usually, taking a minute to THINK and organize your thoughts is worth the time in the end. Organize & label your work, and before you go on to the next step, make sure you understand what information you have & what you just calculated so you know how to use it in the next steps.

All the best,

Math Help Services