Reduce Your Math Anxiety at Test Time

Steps You Can Take

Here are several suggestions that may help you concentrate and do better on math/science tests!

- **Put key information in front of you.** Before you start the exam, write down any formulas that you may need during the exam. Use the back of the test if you don’t have scrap paper available.

- **Read through the test/exam first.** Read through every problem quickly. Make some notes on how you might attempt to solve the problem if something occurs to you immediately.

- **Analyze problems carefully.** Categorize problems according to type. Take all the “givens” into account, and write down formulas or definitions that apply before you do your calculations. Focus on what you what to prove. If some problems seem easier than others, do them first.

- **Estimate before you begin to approximate the solution.** Estimate the answer first, then work out the problem and check your answer against the estimate. The two answers should be close. If they’re not, recheck your calculations.

- **Break the calculation into the smallest possible pieces.** Go step by step. Try to focus on the information needed to solve the problem.

- **Recall how you solved similar problems.** Past experience can give you valuable clues to how a particular problem should be handled.

- **Draw a picture to help you see the problem.** This can be a diagram, a chart, a probability tree, a geometric figure, or any other visual image that relates to the problem at hand.
• **Try not to rush.** Precision demands concentration. Take the time you need to reach an accurate solution. However, keep an eye on the time if the test has a time limit. You don’t want to miss doing some questions and losing marks because you ran out of time.

• **Be neat.** When it comes to numbers, mistaken identity can mean the difference between a right and a wrong answer. Work neatly so you can look back over your work for errors. Record all your work and calculations.

• **Use the opposite operation to check your work.** When you arrive at an answer, work backwards to see if you are correct. Use subtraction to check addition, and multiplication to check division, and so on.

**Look back at the questions to be sure you did everything that was asked.** Did you answer every part of the question? Remember, questions often will have two parts to complete. Did you show all the required work? Be as thorough as you possibly can? If you have time, rework the questions and see if you arrive at the same answer.

Based on:

*C. Carter, J. Bishop and S. Lyman Kravits : Keys to Effective Learning ( Developing Powerful Habits of Mind) 2008 Pearson/Prentice Hall. Page 296.*

---

**LEARNING ASSISTANCE CENTRE**

The Learning Assistance Centre provides a number of educational supports to students of RRC including: peer tutoring, course content workshops, study skill workshops, on-line resources, advising and referrals, in-class study skill presentations and tutoring services for students with a disability. Subject to tutor availability, peer tutoring is available at no cost to students enrolled in a variety of college programs. For more information, go to http://www.rrc.mb.ca/lac or call Ron Hamerling at 632-2251.