

# How to Reduce Test Anxiety

Grounding techniques to reduce anxiety  
right before and during a test

## Deep Breathing

- Sit upright with both feet on the floor. Close eyes gently
- Inhale slowly and deeply through your nose. Try breathing from abdomen rather than chest
- Hold your inhale for a second or two and exhale slowly through your nose and mouth. Imagine breathing out the tension
- Keep your breathing slow and smooth and rhythmic. Take at least five full abdominal breaths.
- 3-5 minutes of this breathing is ideal but even 30 seconds of deep breathing can dramatically reduce anxiety

## Freewriting

- Spend 10 minutes before the test writing whatever comes to mind, anxiety, things filling your brain space, anything and everything.
- Unloading your brain in this physical way can act as a way of unloading anxieties, freeing up brainpower and reducing demands on working memory.

## Progressive Muscle Relaxation

- Get in a relaxed and upright position with your feet flat on the floor and lower back firmly against the back of the chair
- Close your eyes
- Tighten your foot by curling your toes in and squeezing as tightly as you can. Hold for 5-10 seconds. Repeat 2 or 3 times. Focus on how relaxed your foot feels after you release the tension.
- Slowly tense and release different muscle groups. Moving upward from toes to face

## Use the Test to Ground You

- Physically interact with the test to help your brain reconnect to what is actually in front of you. Help your brain slow down and focus. Interrupt blank brain by physically bringing it back to the words in front of you.
- Tap your pencil over each word as you read them
- Circle helpful words
- Cross out unhelpful/extraneous words
- Trace words