



How to **TEST BEST**

You can get through those test jitters. Here's how.

It's back to school, which means it's back to tests. ¶ Which also might mean it's back to being majorly stressed out. ¶ It doesn't have to be this way. Here are some simple ways to prepare thoroughly for tests, as well as stay cool while you're taking them.

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Schedule Study Time

Trying to cram all your studying into the night before a test makes it impossible to master all the material, and it also will make you tired and stressed on the day of the test.

Instead, prepare for a test by scheduling study time each day for several days before. Dr. Russell Hyken, a psychologist who focuses on education says, "This will help you store important information in your memory that you will need on test day. The night before should be a review of information you already know and an opportunity to practice what you have learned."

Use Your Time Wisely

Before studying, clear your desk of electronics, games and your phone so you won't get distracted. Also, make sure you have all the supplies you need to study so you don't lose focus.

While hitting the books, be sure to scatter breaks of a few minutes each here and there into your study time. Get a snack, take a bathroom break or play a quick computer game when it feels as if your brain is about to explode.


Form a Study Group

Studying with a parent or friends can help you understand the material better and learn from one another. Putting

together a study group before a test can be a great way to review what you have learned by splitting up the material into more manageable chunks.

Have every person or pair take a part of the material and make a study sheet, come up with questions to quiz the group or make flash cards. Plan carefully who you want to be in your study group. If you think someone won't do their share of the work or will just goof off, they probably aren't a good person to include.

Keep the group small because the larger a group is, the more confusion and distractions are possible. Have everyone take turns as the group leader, who will assign material and



make sure that conversation stays on what is being studied.

Don't Forget Last-Minute Prep

Have your sharpened pencils and other materials in your bag ready to go the night before the test. Don't underestimate the importance of getting a good night's sleep and then eating a healthy breakfast the next morning. This way, both your mind and body are fully prepared.

Also, studying all the way up until test time can only create more anxiety. Stop studying an hour beforehand. If you don't know the material by then, it's not likely that you will be studying until the very last second.

And Now for the Test ...

► Right away, jot down important tables, formulas and definitions you think you might need on the back of the test. This is especially important on math tests.

► Read over the entire test when you first get it, answering the easiest questions first. While doing this, take the opportunity to notice if any questions give hints for other test answers.

► After your pre-read and when you begin working on the test from the beginning, focus on only one question at a time. Read each question and any instructions carefully!

► For multiple-choice questions, "read the question and answer it on your

own before looking at the provided responses. That way, you won't be as distracted by answers that are close but not quite right," Hyken advises.

► When you get to essay questions, outline a few key points in the margin to keep you focused while you are writing.

► If you start to feel stressed, remember to breathe deeply. Tensing and relaxing your muscles can also help you relax.

► When it comes right down to it, partial credit is better than no credit at all. If you're unsure about an answer, it usually doesn't hurt for you to give your best guess. ✦