

Math and Test Anxiety

Do you find yourself lacking the motivation to work on your math? Do you often put off doing your math homework until the last minute? Do you have trouble remembering math facts? Do you sometimes panic when you do your math homework or take math tests? Do you have a consistently negative attitude towards math? If so, you probably have math anxiety, and you are not alone. Many students experience the symptoms of math anxiety.

For some students, anxiety can prevent them from achieving their full potential in math class. There are many causes for math and test anxiety. Students can associate grades with their self-worth, be placed in the wrong class, have suffered embarrassment or other negative experiences in a math class in the past, or have poor study habits.

It is extremely important to recognize anxiety and then work to alleviate it. The good news is that you can take steps to be less anxious about math and less anxious when taking math tests. Here are some specific pointers for managing your math and test anxiety:

1. **Do math every day.** You must avoid doing all your math homework and studying only one or two days per week. Schedule quality study time throughout the week and stick to your schedule.
2. **Study smart.** Try different techniques for studying. The more you try different approaches, the more you will discover what works for you.
3. **Attend class.** You must attend class every day to keep up with the fast pace of a college math course. You will also get valuable information regarding tests and instructor expectations. You will see examples that are not in the textbook. You are responsible for all information and concepts presented in class, whether you are present or not.

4. **Get organized!** You need to keep good class notes. Much anxiety is caused by disorganization. See the handouts on **Keeping an Organized Notebook** and **Note Taking** for information about getting organized and taking good notes.

5. **Continually test yourself.** Be aware of what you know and of what you don't know. Keep practicing the concepts and problems presented in the classroom and in the textbook.

6. **Replace negative self-talk with positive self-talk.** Having a negative attitude is an obstacle. Be mindful of what you are saying to yourself. Develop positive affirmations such as "I will succeed in this course!" or "I love math!" to counteract any negative feelings you may have about your abilities or about math itself.

7. **Utilize all your resources.** There are many different resources on campus to help you succeed. Go to your instructor's office hours, spend time studying in the MARC, or make an appointment at the Writing & Tutoring Center or the Business Education Center for one-on-one help.

8. **Consciously relax.** Practice relaxation exercises along with positively visualizing the exam going well for you.

a. Breathe deeply, in through your nose and out through your mouth.

b. Relax all your muscles. Tense your muscles and hold for a few seconds. Relax. Repeat one more time if necessary.

c. Act as if you have control over your present level of success.

[http://salsa.missioncollege.org/mss/stories/storyReader\\$9](http://salsa.missioncollege.org/mss/stories/storyReader$9).

If these strategies do not work for you, you may want to see a counselor to talk through the issues you are experiencing. The counseling services in the north end of building 7 will be able to assist you. Don't try to ignore the problem. Get the help that you need now so that you can be successful.

