

Self-Hypnosis Tips for Testing Anxiety

Testing anxiety is a common obstacle for almost all students, even those who study a lot. The root cause of anxiety is in the subconscious mind not in the conscious mind. Students can analyze and rationalize their test-taking anxieties, but without changing one's perception and beliefs, there will always be some nervousness that will impact a student's testing achievement. Students come to tests as human beings with a complex mix of emotions, experiences, and beliefs that influence their testing behavior. Students do not suddenly attain self-mastery just because they are taking a test. Releasing negative beliefs and feelings may be done consciously, but it may take years. However, through hypnosis, students can release their negative beliefs and feelings in a few sessions (usually one to three). Hypnosis is a technique that goes straight to the subconscious source of our emotions and beliefs. When we solve our problems subconsciously, we feel better immediately and a new positive belief replaces the old one. Changing our feelings has a powerful effect on our behavior and confidence. There are many reasons for testing anxiety such as some of the most common ones listed here.

- Fear of failure
- Inflating the test's importance
- Poor decision-making
- Negative thoughts
- Procrastination
- Lack of preparation
- Inability to ask for help
- Fear of disappointing parents
- Low self-esteem
- Lack of self-awareness
- Lack of self-monitoring skills
- Time allotment
- Lack of practice
- Stress, fatigue, or hunger

While studying and practicing have been traditional responses to test anxiety, students rarely use their subconscious intelligence to increase their success. Subconscious techniques are especially powerful because they help students relax the body and release negative beliefs that can spiral out of control while taking a test.

For example, as a student takes a test such as the SAT for college admission, he may experience drawing a blank, inability to focus, or even panic. These feelings if not released immediately can compound and have devastating effects over the course of a three-hour, multi-section test. Most students have a difficult time

letting go of a hard question or a poor performance on a section. Sometimes, it can even lead to giving up on the test entirely. This is especially true for students who are perfectionists or who need to feel in control all the time. There is hope however. Studies show that students would perform significantly better if they had more time. Timed testing increases a student's anxiety because they feel they are racing against the clock. However, if they were taught techniques to clear the mind, reduce stress, and focus their mind, they would be able to curtail their anxiety and perform with more accuracy and speed. Other studies also show that when students increase their relaxation, their awareness also increases.

Hypnosis is an invaluable technique for reducing test anxiety. While students cannot have their hypnotherapist sitting next to them as they take the test, they can use self-hypnosis effectively with a little practice.

Five Self-Hypnosis Techniques

1. **Counting Down**-Count down from ten to one and take a deep breath before the test begins. During the test, count down from three to one and take a deep breath the minute you feel yourself growing nervous.
2. **Visualization**-Before the test, visualize yourself doing well on the test. For example, visualize yourself moving through the test problems confidently.
3. **Create an Anchor**-Before the test, place the thumb and index finger of either hand together and say a word such as relax. Whenever you feel yourself starting to panic, simply put together your fingers and say the word. This anchor will train your mind to clear itself of its mental chatter and signal your body to relax.
4. **Meditate**-Between test sections, close your eyes and visualize being in a comfortable and peaceful place such as an island or in a meadow. This helps to keep your body relaxed and your mind sharp. If you find you do not have any extra time between sections, simply close your eyes and repeat the phrase, "I am relaxed" over and over.
5. **Affirm**-After finishing each section, say a short, present tense affirmation about your performance such as "I do well on this test." You may also state that you clear your mind for the next section.

These five steps will assist students to have effective mind/body tools that will decrease their anxiety. For those students who feel they need further help, a private session with a qualified hypnotherapist can make a difference in how they behave and feel during tests. On important exams, hypnosis gives students the extra edge. Schedule a session as far in advance of the exam as possible.

The Hypnotism Society of Pennsylvania is an excellent resource to find a Hypnotist in the Pittsburgh and surrounding areas.

www.hypnopa.com