

Math Test Anxiety

Study Tips

Math Anxiety

Don't panic! Feeling nervous about math is very common. Do you...

- feel [NERVOUS](#) before a math test?
- [PANIC](#) and freeze while taking math tests?
- feel [HELPLESS](#) doing your homework?
- think that it's [HOPELESS](#) - you just don't get math, never will, so there's no sense even trying?

[I read everything, now what?](#)

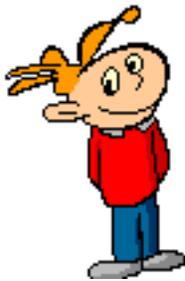
Nervous Nights

Stomach-churning head-spinning sleepless nights can be a sign of math anxiety. Try these simple ideas to help you relax and wake up feeling in charge.



1. Study - OK, that sounds dumb. Of course you should study. Check out these [study tips](#). But look at #2...
2. Don't study too much! Spending too much time going over and over the same stuff won't help and will just overwhelm you.
3. Calm those fears by treating yourself with calmness. Try to have a set routine - knowing that you ALWAYS eat oatmeal on test days might just help. Go to bed on time. In the morning, eat breakfast, put on your lucky sweater (really! it works!), and pack yourself a treat for lunch.

[\[Back to top\]](#)



Test... Brain... Freeze... Panic

OK - you studied, got a good nights sleep and are wearing the lucky sweater. You get to class and forget your name. What to do now?

1. Remember your name. No, really - just think of something that you DO know is the first step in remembering all those lost formulas.
2. Unfreeze your mind by unfreezing your body. Give yourself a quick stretch (don't get up and do jumping jacks, OK?) and tell yourself you are OK. Take a deep breath and try to break the cycle of the panic.
3. Work around the panic by finding something on the test that you can do. Gain confidence and then go back and finish the rest of the problems. Keep going on the ones you can do, then go back and try the others. You might be surprised to find that you can now tackle them with ease.

[\[Back to top\]](#)

Where are the Homework Elves?

Yes, we agree, it would be nice if the homework elves came in the middle of the night to do your homework, but that hasn't happened yet (to us, anyway). So try these tips when you find yourself wishing for them.



1. Draw a picture. Try a new way. Talk it out. Sometimes just telling someone else about the problem can help break that mental block. Drawing and talking use different parts of your brain than the math-oriented parts - let your brain help you out!
2. Jump on it. If you are leaving your math homework until last you may be too tired to tackle it. Do it first, even if it isn't your favorite.
3. Totally stuck? Take a break - then go back to work (funny how we forget the last part...). Even doing a different problem can help you get the gears moving again.

[\[Back to top\]](#)



It's Hopeless - Don't Bother!

Well, you are here at least, so it must not be THAT hopeless. Most people feel that they are the only ones who don't get it. It's not true.

1. Ask for help. There are lots of people around who can help if you just ask. Find a tutor or ask your teacher.
2. If the help isn't working, change it! It's OK to try a different way.
3. Try to remember if there was a particular incident related to math that was unpleasant. Sometimes a bad early experience can lead to a general feeling of anxiety about all math, which can lead to stronger feelings without realizing the cause. Sometimes just recalling and talking about the first incident can help you deal with the anxiety.

Now what?

Math anxiety can be overcome. It's a matter of admitting that it is something you want to get over and working on it. Here are two more suggestions:



1. Check out [Ask Dr. Math](#). Dr. Math has been busy answering questions from students just like you about all sorts of subjects. Looking at these questions might help you feel a little less alone in the universe!
2. Math isn't all tests and problems, either. Finding things you like about math can help make you feel better, too. Check out the [Wonders of Math](#) and [Puzzles](#) sections for the amazing math found in art, puzzles, and games.

From <http://www.math.com/students/advice/anxiety.html>