

Combating Test Anxiety

While there are general best practices to use when taking a test, there are even more specific strategies that you can use in order to help combat test anxiety. If you are still feeling overwhelmed with test taking after implementing these strategies, the Student Success Center and SHAW (Student Health and Wellness) have resources to help you manage this test anxiety.

Before the Exam: Getting Prepared

- Allow adequate preparation time, so that you will have an opportunity to study and know the material well enough to recall it automatically--even when you are feeling nervous. Use your knowledge of the **Forgetting Curve** to help you plan out your studies.
- Study a small amount each day to help with retention and to prevent the need to cram.
- Establish study goals that focus on review the main concepts and important sections of each course. Take each goal one step at a time.
- Take reasonable breaks (5-10 minutes per hour; reference the **Study Cycle** for help with this)
- Try to simulate exam conditions by working through a practice test, following the same constraints that you will have on exam day
- Take care of yourself by continuing to exercise good nutrition, physical activity, and sleep habits. If you are physically or emotionally exhausted, it will be more difficult for you to handle anxiety and work effectively.
- **MOST IMPORTANTLY:** Remember that it is only a test--it is not a reflection of self-worth. Counter negative self-talk with positive, affirming statements.

During the Exam: Staying Grounded

- Review the entire test as soon as you get it. See how long it is, determine which sections are worth the most points, and determine a plan for budgeting your time.
- Read the directions carefully. Many points are lost on tests when students are in too great a hurry to get started!
- Work on the easiest portions first. Focus on answering the question and showing what you know, as opposed to worrying about what your grade will be
- Outline essays before you begin to write them
- Stay focused. Concentrate on the test, not on those around you.
- Wear a watch. Stay conscious of how much time you have left, and plan to use the full time allotted.
- Relieve physical tension by tensing and relaxing muscles throughout your body and taking a couple of slow, deep breaths
- Maintain a positive attitude, and practice positive self-talk. There is no benefit to negative thinking!

Combating Test Anxiety, cont.

While there are general best practices to use when taking a test, there are even more specific strategies that you can use in order to help combat test anxiety. If you are still feeling overwhelmed with test taking after implementing these strategies, the Student Success Center and SHAW (Student Health and Wellness) have resources to help you manage this test anxiety.

When and How to Seek Help: Available Resources

- If you would like to meet with an Academic Skills Tutor to help you devise additional test-taking strategies, talk through study skills, give pointers on note taking, or to gain assistance on how to best manage your time, appointments can be booked online through the Student Success Center website.
- Consider seeking mental health services if your anxiety is causing emotional distress and/or impacting your health, well-being, and ability to accomplish goals
- SHAW Counseling Services provides confidential, short-term assistance to help students understand and resolve concerns that may be interfering with their ability to achieve academic and personal goals. Students frequently seek counseling for assistance with issues related to stress, anxiety, and academic concerns.
- Students who are currently enrolled for class credits at UWM and who pay the student fee are eligible for services at no cost. Call 414-229-7429 or visit <https://uwm.edu/wellness/counseling/> to schedule an appointment.

Student Success Center: Academic Skills Tutoring

Request to book an appointment online:
<https://uwm.edu/studentsuccess/academicskillstutoring/>

OR

Visit us in person: Bolton 120
Monday-Thursday, 9:00AM-5:00PM
Fridays, 9:00AM-3:00PM

SHAW Location and Clinic Hours:

NWQ Building D, 7th and 8th Floors
2025 E. Newport Ave.,
Milwaukee, WI 53211

Monday-Thursday, 8:00AM-4:30PM
Fridays, 9:00AM-4:30PM