

## Become a Better Test-Taker

- ↪ I knew the answer but couldn't think of it during the test!
- ↪ I knew I couldn't do well and, big surprise, I didn't!
- ↪ I get so flustered I can't think!



*Do any of these sound familiar? They are common symptoms of test anxiety. Here are a few tips to help you overcome that anxiety and show your professor what you know.*

### **BEFORE THE TEST:**

1. **Be prepared.** Spend the time to study and understand the material thoroughly before the day of the test.
2. **Take breaks.** Take breaks while you're studying. You will learn and remember more for a longer period of time.
3. **Sleep.** You need a good night's sleep the night before the test. Don't spend the night cramming – even short-term memory doesn't work well under those conditions.
4. **Eat healthy.** Fresh fruits and vegetables are recommended to reduce stress. Avoid foods which contribute to stress: sugar, processed foods, caffeine, fried foods, chocolate, chips, food with heavy spices, and carbonated soft drinks.
5. **Arrive early.** Schedule your activities around the test and leave plenty of time to arrive early and relax before the test starts.
6. **Avoid those who increase your anxiety.** Even your best friend can unknowingly increase your anxiety. If that's the case, arrange to see them after the test is done not before.
7. **Approach the test with confidence.** View the test as an opportunity to show how much you've studied and your grade as a reward for that hard work.

### **DURING THE TEST:**

8. **Look over the entire test first.** What kind of exam is it – essay or short answer or multiple choice? Decide how much time you have for each section and start with those sections that you know the best.
9. **Hide.** Study in an out-of-the-way place. As tempted as you are to study with your friends, your best bet is to find a place of your own where you can think. Stay away from those people wanting to borrow your notes.
10. **Change position.** Get up and get a drink if allowed. Eat a snack (healthy-please).

11. **Breathe deeply.** Fill your lungs to the max and then breath out – all the way out. Visualize your anxiety leaving with your breath.
12. **If you go blank, go on.** Don't agonize over a single question. If you're not sure, go to the next question and come back to this one at the end.
13. **Take extra time.** If you finish early, take the time to go back over your test and check your answers. Better to find and correct your mistakes than letting your instructor find them.
14. **Essay Exam.** Follow these simple steps to improve your answer: Read the question and identify the key word(s); Construct a short outline of your answer; Start with a summary statement; and take the time to show what you know.
15. **Multiple Choice Exams.** Follow these simple steps to help select the best answer: Read the question carefully; Read all of the options carefully; Watch for those qualifying words **All – Most – Always – Only**; Eliminate all of the options you can; and Rely on your first impression.

**The Lou Holtz 10/90 Philosophy**

*10% of life is what happens to you.*

*90% of life is what you do with the 10%.*

**RESOURCE NOTE:**

While these tips are helpful for the person who is only a little test anxious, the person who has moderate or severe test anxiety will need more help.