

# High Anxiety

## How to Reduce the Stress of Taking Online Tests

Students of all ages and persuasions experience test anxiety and for some it can be a serious problem. Test anxiety is an uneasiness or apprehension experienced before, during, or after an examination. Some students find that anxiety interferes with their learning to such an extent that their grades are seriously affected.

Test anxiety is so common that most colleges offer counseling to help students overcome it. Type in the keywords “test anxiety” into the Google search engine, and you get over 10 pages of links. (Some of the more useful ones are noted at the end of this document.)

The good news is that there are numerous methods to overcome test anxiety.

### Overcoming Test Anxiety

First, recognize that Dynamic Works Institute believes in the Mastery principle, which, simply stated, means that you continue trying to master the material without penalty until you are successful. This means that you can take pretests and final exams as often as you like. Your student transcript will only show your successes, and the best and most recent successes at that.

Second, understand that you don't have to eliminate concern over your tests entirely. It helps to be "up" for exams. The goal is to reduce the anxiety to a manageable level.

Third, the single-most important factor is getting prepared. Here are some suggestions for being thoroughly prepared:

- Don't just take the final until you pass. Read the material.
- Visit the suggested links.
- Memorize or at least carefully read the definitions in the glossary. Many test questions are based on terminology.
- Take notes in your own words.
- Alternatively, print pages with key concepts and highlight the concept.
- Do every single one of the exercises. *Here's a hint:* Many of the test questions are derived from the exercise material.

If your employer has imposed a deadline for the Certification exam, don't wait until the last minute and then cram all your courses into one day. Take the class finals at manageable intervals so that you can digest the material, but don't wait too long before you take the Certification exam.

We find that students who study the material and take the regular finals do overwhelmingly better than their peers who just try to “wing it.” In fact, 89% of our students pass their Certification exam on the first attempt. Over 99% pass the Certification exam within two tries. Investigation into the remaining one-tenth of a percent who need three or more tries reveals that they did not prepare.

Many of our members find that their anxiety level drops dramatically after they've passed their first final. Therefore, it makes sense to take an easy course first. Take a look at the courses in the tier and pick one that you feel most comfortable with. The courses don't have to be completed in any particular order.

Here are some practical tips for overcoming test anxiety.

**Before:**

- Re-take some pre-tests the day before with conditions as much like the test as possible.
- Review your notes for an overall view of the tier material. Put your notes in your own words.
- Get enough sleep and don't take an exam on an empty stomach.
- Avoid caffeine, which increases anxiety.
- Remember to encourage yourself and STOP critical statements. Picture yourself succeeding.
- Schedule your time.
- Permit yourself to feel composed. You have no time limits on final exams, and a full three hours for the certification exam.
- Avoid anxious conversation about the exam.
- Make sure you have a quiet location without interruptions.
- Be sure you're using a stable Internet connection. Don't take the exam during severe weather.

**During:**

- Focus your attention on the test. Don't waste time and energy worrying, thinking about the consequences of not doing well, or wondering what others are doing.
- READ THE DIRECTIONS CAREFULLY. Respond to the test messages thoughtfully instead of just clicking through them.
- Review all of the questions briefly.
- Think about only one question at a time.
- Think of your own answer before looking at the choices provided. Eliminate clearly wrong answers.
- If you don't know an answer, skip it and write down the question number. Suggest to yourself that you probably studied it and the answer will come to you when you get back to it.
- Use all the time allowed for reviewing your answers. Only change answers if you are sure of the change. Usually, your first answer is the correct answer.
- Use the blue squares to remind you of unanswered questions. Don't submit the exam for scoring until you have answered every single question.
- Print your test with your answers just before submitting for scoring.
- If you start to feel anxious, practice your relaxation techniques. Use anxiety as a cue to relax. Close your eyes, take three deep breaths and then get back to the task.

Remember, we're on your side. We want our members to be successful, not just by becoming Certified, but also by using what they've learned and helping others. The staff members at Dynamic Works Institute are proud of our members and all they've accomplished.

**Other Links**

1. University of Illinois - [www.couns.uiuc.edu/Brochures/testanx.htm](http://www.couns.uiuc.edu/Brochures/testanx.htm)
2. University of Western Ontario - [www.sdc.uwo.ca/learning/mcanx.html](http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/learning/mcanx.html)
3. Check out [www.howtostudy.org](http://www.howtostudy.org) for hints on developing your study skills