Managing Test Anxiety

<u>True or False</u>: Test anxiety is normal?

<u>Answer</u>: True

- Most people feel some level of anxiety before an important test.
- It is not only normal, but the resulting increase in adrenaline can actually enhance performance, both on a test and in other performance arenas like the tennis court.
- However, researchers estimate that up to 30% of the population get so anxious prior to a test that their ability to perform well is impaired.
- If you are among that 30%, don't despair. Below are the major causes of test anxiety and some solutions to try.

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<u>MINDFULNESS EXERCISES & RELAXATION STRATEGIES</u>:

- Think about a time you *overcame a setback*. How did you do it? (increases **resilience**.)
- Think about a time you *were successful*. How did you do it? (reinforces **positive attitude**.)
- Deep breathing, meditation and yoga all divert focus from anxiety to calm.
- Try phone apps for coloring, jigsaw puzzles, tangrams, solitaire and relaxation.
- Do some actual coloring, jigsaw puzzles, or try Zentangle.

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<u>The Five Causes of Test Anxiety</u>:

1. **Fear of the Unknown** (Find out as much as possible before the test.)
   - Material to be covered
   - Weight of the test (percentage of overall grade)
   - Test format [i.e., essay, multiple choice, T/F]
   - Time allotted for test
   - Test location
2. **Feeling inadequate**
   - **Prepare!** Refer back to note taking and study skills resources
   - Write out your worries
   - Try exercises on resilience and positive thinking (see box, above)
3. **Fear of the stakes**
   - Your entire future doesn't rest on one test.
   - You may have to revise your plans if you do poorly on a test.
4. **Perfectionism** (Pressure from outside and self pressure)
   - **Prepare!** and do your best
   - "Failure" is a great teacher. Learn where your weaknesses are so you can strengthen them.
5. **Past Failures (**Negativity bias)
   - **PREPARE!   RELAX!   VISUALIZE SUCCESS!**