

# TRIO

Do you get nervous when you take tests?  
Do you have a hard time answering essay questions?

Do you sometimes run out of time? Are your test grades lower than you want them to be?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, you may want to work on your test-taking skills.

**To do well on any test, you need to know the material and be prepared. Smart test takers know strategies to improve their confidence and help them answer correctly on tests.**

**EXERCISE ONE:** Read the tips below and check the appropriate box—how often do you use them?

	ALWAYS	SOMETIMES	NEVER
Get a good night's sleep before the test and have a healthy breakfast.			
Have everything you need for the test when you get there.			
As soon as you get there, write anything you want to remember at the top of the test or on a blank piece of paper (names, formulas, dates, etc.)			
Carefully read the directions on the test.			
Before you begin, quickly look over the entire test and decide how much time you'll spend on each section or question.			
Skip questions you don't know the answer to but return to them later.			
Use all of the time you are given for the test (even if you finish early, you go back and check all your answers).			
Avoid cramming the night/morning before the test.			
Meet with your professor prior to the exam day to discuss the exam.			
Avoid missing class, especially the day before the exam which often is review day.			
Use mnemonic devices, acronyms, rhymes, and other memorization techniques.			
Sit near the front of class every time, participate in the discussions, and get notes from someone if you miss a class.			

Circle the techniques that you sometimes or never use but you plan on using them in the future.

Which ones do you want more information about?

You already know there are several different kinds of tests. Here are some tips for each.

Multiple-choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Try to come up with the answer in your head before you look at the answer choices.</li><li>• Read all the answer choices. If you're not sure which is correct, cross out the ones you know are wrong and make an educated guess.</li></ul>
True/false	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Look for key words. For example, statements with <i>all</i>, <i>always</i>, <i>never</i>, <i>every</i>, and <i>none</i> are usually false statements.</li><li>• If you have no idea if a statement is true or false, go with true. Research has shown that true is correct more often than false.</li></ul>
Essay questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Read all questions and start with the easiest one.</li><li>• Before you start writing, brainstorm. Jot down the key words, ideas, and points you want to cover.</li><li>• In the opening paragraph, tell the reader what to expect to learn from your essay. In the middle paragraphs, present examples, facts, and details to support your points. In the final paragraph, restate the most important points, draw conclusions or write a brief summary.</li></ul>
Open book test	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Put self-stick notes or bookmarks in your textbook to help you locate information quickly. If you are allowed to use your notes, do the following.</li><li>• Make sure the most important information in your notes is highlighted.</li><li>• Have all the information you know you're going to need on one sheet of paper.</li><li>• Don't wait till the last minute! These can be lengthy and tough tests.</li></ul>
Math test	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Show all of your work and write numbers neatly.</li><li>• If you're having difficulty with a problem, try drawing a picture or diagram.</li><li>• Before you begin to solve a problem, estimate the answer.</li><li>• Don't spend too much time on any one problem. Finish the test, and then go back to the problems you had trouble with.</li><li>• Go over your work and look for careless mistakes. If you have time, do the problems again and see if you come up with the same answers.</li></ul>

**EXERCISE TWO:** Watch the two brief videos below.

<https://youtu.be/jYWfiP7w5w0> What pieces of information did you find helpful in this video?

<https://youtu.be/0aF7G0TMh7M> What pieces of information did you find helpful in this video?

Do you experience any of the following?

- You feel like you “go blank” at tests.
- You get frustrated or angry while taking a test.
- You find yourself thinking, “I can’t do this,” or “I’m stupid.”
- You feel like the room is closing in on you when you take tests.
- You feel your heart racing or find it hard to breathe during tests.
- The answers to test questions come to you after you’ve turned it in.
- Your tests scores are much lower than you get on homework or written papers.
- During tests you get headaches, nausea, excessive sweating, or dry mouth.
- You avoid exams altogether.

If you checked some of these items, you might want to address your test anxiety. Here are some ideas.

**EXERCISE THREE:** Watch the brief video below about test anxiety.

<https://youtu.be/t-9cqaR JMP4> What tips did you find helpful?

## **MORE TIPS**

- *Develop good study habits so you are really learning the material.*
- *Study over the whole semester, not just the last minute.*
- *Go to every class and do all assignments on time.*
- *Keep a positive attitude with reasonable expectations for yourself.*
- *Establish relaxation techniques and positive self-talk. Try attending the FLC Meditation and Mindfulness club, talk to someone at the FLC Counseling Center, or visit the testing center to see if you can take your tests there instead.*
- *Get used to it: take mock tests, practice tests, and have friends quiz you so you become accustomed to the feeling.*
- *If you can, use previous exams to study for finals. You might see questions or problems repeated.*

**Now ask your friends or classmates for two more ideas:**

1.

2.