



Self-Management

De-Stress for a Test

Pre-Teaching/ Guiding Language:

Test taking is a skill that many young people and even adults struggle with. You know how it goes, the night before a big test or exam you can't sleep. You may keep trying to read your notes but can't focus and then suddenly you are sitting in front of the exam and forget everything! This does not have to be the case and if we can make sure we have a solid pre- AND post-test routine we can start to break the cycle of the dreaded "Test Stress".

Pre-Test:

- 1. Prep with the right pace:** When you know you have a big test or exam coming up try your best not to wait until the last minute. Create a plan or schedule that allows you 15-20 minutes each night before the test to prepare. This way you don't feel like you need to pull an "all nighter" the night before. This also allows you some time to ask your teacher questions, or search for answers if you come across something you are unsure of.
- 2. Prep your brain AND your body:** While your brain gets a workout make sure you are also taking care of your body. Exercise, eating well, and a good night's sleep will help you feel your absolute best before taking a test.
- 3. Prep your stuff:** There is nothing worse than running late the morning of a big test. Take 10 minutes the night before to pack your backpack full of whatever it is you might need the next day. Not only for the test but if you have afterschool activities, gym clothes, etc. There's nothing worse than being mid-exam and worrying if you forgot your tennis racquet for practice after school.

Key Takeaways:

- Students will learn to ground themselves and calm down before a test.
- Students will learn how to unwind after a test.
- Students will be given the tools to effectively prepare for a test.
- Students will understand how to utilize these tools prior to a test.

Duration + Materials:

- 15 minutes

Key Vocabulary:

- **Cycle-** A series of events that are regularly repeated in the same order.
- **Tension-** Mental or emotional strain.



4. **Prep your mind:** Take 5 minutes before your test to feel grounded in your surroundings. A quick “5 senses” grounding activity always does the trick! While you are sitting and waiting to begin center yourself and focus solely on your 5 senses. For example:

- I hear the clock ticking.
- I taste the sip of water I just had.
- I feel my desk under my palms.
- I smell the air freshener in the classroom.
- I see my teacher and my friends in my class.

Post-Test:

1. **Release your tension and breathe.** You did it! The test is over, and you can try and release any tension you may have been holding in your body. Be sure to focus on your shoulders and your neck.
2. **Reward yourself.** You made it through a very stressful day, allow yourself time to go for a run, have a dessert you really enjoy, or watch a show that you need to catch up on! Whatever brings you joy and feels like a treat.
3. **Put away your notes and study guides.** Reviewing your notes and checking answers you may have been unsure of will not fix anything now. You did your best and your notes can be retired until the graded test is returned to you.
4. **Spend quality time with your friends and family.** You have likely been cooped up studying for a week or so for your big test. Get your mind off studying for a night and spend time with your friends.
5. **If it didn't go so well.** Remember, there is always next time. Review your test and make corrections, talk with your teacher about what went wrong and figure out a plan to do your best the next time around.

Activity:

1. Teachers will use pre-teaching materials to introduce the pre- and post-test routine.
2. Teachers will walk through each of the steps with students and use the discussion questions to hear how students have previously prepped for a test.
3. Teachers should ensure that students are given ample time to prepare for tests and should prompt students daily before a test to make sure they are preparing.
4. Encourage students to create their own “pre-test” routine of things that help them “beat the test stress”.

Discussion Questions:

1. How do you typically study for a test?
2. What about taking a test stresses you out the most?
3. Have you ever felt prepared for a test and then didn't do as well as you thought?
 - a. How did you handle that?
4. Do you have a “pre-test routine?” What is it?
5. Do you have a “post-test” routine? What is it?

Reinforcement Activities:

1. Be sure to allow students 5 minutes before a test to center themselves and get ready.
2. After a big test allow students the rest of the period to quietly engage in a preferred activity.