**Additional Resources at UCI:**

- Your registration fees give you **FREE** access to the UCI Counseling Center. They have both individual and group counseling for stress and anxiety.
- Visit [http://www.counseling.uci.edu/](http://www.counseling.uci.edu/) or call them at (949) 824-6457.

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### Test Anxiety at UCI

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Ideas for this document came from:
http://www.couns.uiuc.edu/brochures/testanx.htm
http://ub-counseling.buffalo.edu/stresstestanxiety.shtml

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### Sound familiar?

You aren’t alone! Test anxiety is a VERY common concern at UCI. The following pages won’t instantly fix you, but they should give you at least three good ideas to help overcome the cycle of stress, poor studying, anxiety, and poor test-taking.

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### During exams...

1. I get an upset stomach, sweaty palms, headaches, or a rapid heartbeat.
2. I blank out when I see the questions.
3. I work hard, but I always run out of time.
4. I go too fast and miss-read the questions.
5. I get distracted and don’t work.

I feel like...

1. I don’t think I studied enough.
2. I study a lot, but I don’t really understand the material.
3. I’m worried about the consequences of a poor grade.
4. I always remember other exams where I did badly.
5. I’m frustrated that my friends do so much better than I do.
You are more important than this test...

Study Tips

- Avoid "cramming" for a test. Spread out studying over several days.
- Learn about how you learn (www.vark-learn.com), and study accordingly.
- Study for 50 minutes, break for 10. Repeat as necessary.
- Don’t just re-read your lecture notes. Manipulate the material! Try each of the following:
  - Lay out all the information you have been presented throughout the quarter and figure out the main concepts of the course.
  - Map each of the lectures as a flow chart on a piece of paper. Do it without notes, then look at your notes and fill in the blanks.
  - Recreate important figures on a blank paper. Fill in as much as you remember, then use your notes to complete it.
  - Invent sample test questions. Integrate ideas from lectures, notes and texts. Make them as difficult as possible.
  - If you learn by listening or talking, find a study buddy. Take turns explaining concepts with your notes put away.
- Download previous exams and take them, recreating the test environment as much as possible.
- Continue the habits of good nutrition and exercise; continue your recreational pursuits and social activities.
- Get plenty of sleep the night before the test — when you are overly tired you will not function at your absolute best.

The Day of the Test

- Begin your day with a moderate breakfast and avoid coffee if you are prone to "caffeine jitters."
- Try to do something relaxing the hour before the test — last minute cramming will cloud your mastering of the overall concepts of the course.
- Plan to arrive at the test location early — this will prevent traffic or parking stress.
- Avoid classmates who generate anxiety and tend to upset your stability.
- If waiting for the test to begin causes anxiety, distract yourself by reading a magazine or newspaper.
- Plan a post-exam reward like a snack or a movie.

During the Test

- First review the entire test, read the directions twice.
- Worried you might forget a fact you have when you walk in? Write it on a blank part of the booklet so it’s safe.
- Work on the easiest portions of the test first. Leave a harder question and come back to it later.
- For multiple choice questions, read all the options first, then eliminate the most obviously wrong. Unsure of the correct response? Rely on your first impression, then move on quickly.
- Do not rush through the test. Wear a watch and check it frequently as you pace yourself. If it appears you will be unable to finish the entire test, concentrate on those portions which you can answer well.
- Recheck your answers only if you have extra time — and only if you are not anxious.

Anxiety Control at the Test

- Tell yourself "I can be anxious later, now is the time to take the exam."
- Try to think of the test as an opportunity to show the professor what you know.
- Focus on answering the question, not on your grade or others’ performances.
- Recognize that your fear may come, but you can power through it.
- Counter negative thoughts with other, more valid thoughts like:
  - “I don’t have to be perfect.”
  - “I’m doing better at this.”
  - “I’m stronger than my fear.”
- Tense and relax muscles throughout your body; take a couple of slow deep breaths and try to maintain a positive attitude.
- Pray or meditate.
- Think for a moment about the post-exam reward you promised yourself.

After the Test

- Whether you did well or not, be sure to follow through on the reward you promised yourself — and enjoy it!
- Try not to dwell on all the mistakes you might have made.
- Do not immediately begin studying for the next test. Indulge in something relaxing for a little while.