



4 TIPS

To Help Students Reduce Test Anxiety

Sufficient Sleep

According to the **National Sleep Foundation**, elementary students need 11 – 13 hours of sleep, and older students need 10 – 11 hours. Getting enough rest is important not just for our overall health, but it can also improve our ability to focus, learn, and retain facts.

1. Remind students to get plenty of sleep the night before an exam.
2. Notify parents of an upcoming test and emphasize the need for plenty of sleep.

Brain Food

Students can have trouble concentrating on an empty stomach, and junk food can cause sugar spikes followed by sharp crashes. **Research shows** that eating a healthy diet improves students' focus, mental capacity, and exam performance.

1. Encourage students to maintain a healthy diet and study on a full stomach to improve retention.
2. When possible, administer tests after meal times — e.g. first thing in the morning or after lunch period.
3. Bring in a healthy snack for your students to eat right before they start the exam.

Relaxation Techniques

Calming exercises such as yoga, meditation, and deep breathing can be an effective way to reduce test anxiety and settle students' nerves. Students can benefit from practicing these techniques on a regular basis, beyond exam day.

1. Take a few minutes before the exam to practice stress-reducing **yoga** or other calming exercises.
2. Teach students **breathing exercises** and have them practice them before and during the test.
3. Try **these additional relaxation activities** with students to reduce their stress before an exam.

Growth Mindset

Stress and anxiety can often cause students to experience negative thoughts and self-criticism. Promoting a growth mindset can help students overcome these feelings. It's important for students to understand that a test is a snapshot in time, and improvements can be made to improve performance in the future.

1. As a class, come up with one or two growth mindset phrases, such as "I can do this!" Chant these phrases together before starting the exam.

This article uses *The Hunger Games* to illustrate how a growth mindset can improve student learning and reduce test-related stress. Have fun sharing these techniques with students.