



Your Brain on Stress



Stress Can Help

Some stress is healthy and even helpful when you're taking an exam! Your brain produces hormones that can help you focus, increase your motivation, and improve performance.

Over-Stress Impacts Thinking

An overly-stressed brain, however, can cause your frontal lobe to go offline as your body navigates the stress. This is great, if you are running from a saber tooth tiger. This is horrible news if you're taking a test. The frontal lobe is where critical thinking happens!



Your Body Sends Signals

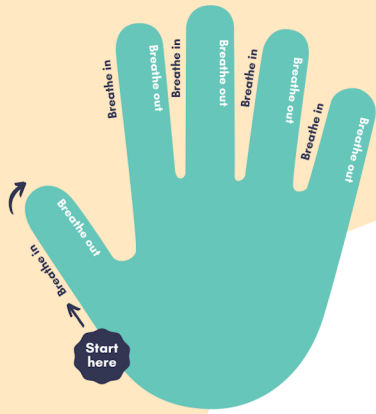
Signs your body might be starting to cross into over-stress could include: racing thoughts, rapid heart beat, quickened breathing, feeling less present in the moment at hand, excessive sweating, sudden temperature shift, etc.

But You Can Reduce The Threat

If your body starts sending you these warning signals that the test is feeling like too much of a threat, there are some simple things you can do to help keep your thinking brain online and reduce the feeling of unsafety!



Managing Test Stress



Just Breathe

Your body knows it can't be under threat if you're able to breathe in a controlled manner. Slowly trace your hand, breathing in on each upward movement and breathing out with every exhale.

Give Yourself a Pep Talk

Negative self talk is like being trapped in the desk with a bully; it adds stress to your brain. Instead, be your own cheerleader. Talk to yourself in third person, encouraging that things will be okay and that you can do hard things! This helps your brain feel like you're a part of a pack that will protect and support you!



Go to Your Happy Place

Before the test, establish a place in your imagination that you feel the most relaxed. Imagine what that place looks like, feels like, smells like, sounds like, etc. When stress rises in the midst of the test, go there in your mind until your body calms down.

Name It to Tame It

If you know test anxiety is a struggle for you, find someone with whom you can talk before and after. Name the emotion, name the fear underneath the emotion (Are you afraid for your future? Feeling like a failure?), and then have your safe person help you tame the fear with truth!

