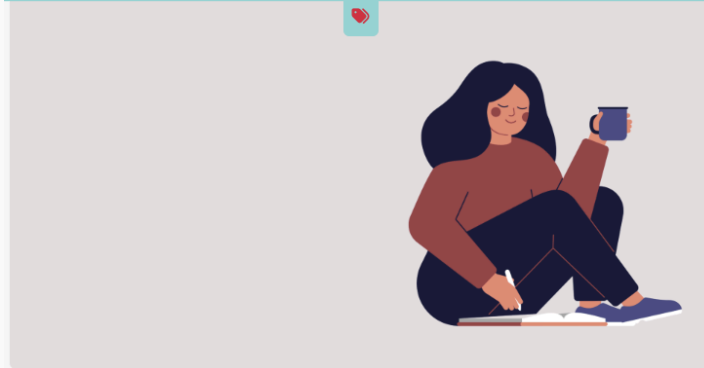


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KNOT TO WORRY

## How to Help 10to20s Manage Test Anxiety



Teens often talk about having “test anxiety” as if it were an automatic reflex—something they’re born with and have to endure. In reality, there’s a great deal that 10to20s can do to bring test anxiety under control. Here are three effective approaches to try. For more on this, check out the “Dear Teenagers” video “How to Study for a Test” [here](#).

### **#1 Encourage your teen to study effectively**

Test anxiety often stems from poor preparation. Some teens may not study enough, while others may rely on inefficient methods like highlighting text and rereading notes—approaches that are among the least effective. Instead, encourage your teen to take practice tests, which serve as a “dress rehearsal” for the real exam. Taking practice tests also helps students actively engage with the material, making it more likely they’ll learn and retain the information. Research shows that students who use active study techniques like quizzing themselves or coming up with and answering sample exam questions not only comprehend the content better but also perform better on tests.

### **#2 Help your teen appreciate the upside of anxiety**

A moderate level of anxiety can actually improve test performance by energizing and focusing the test taker. Performance suffers only when anxiety becomes overwhelming. Let your 10to20 know that some tension is normal and even beneficial during a test. Teens who believe they should be completely calm during exams may become anxious about their anxiety, causing a downward spiral. Encourage them to expect and accept a certain amount of anxiety as part of the testing process.

### **#3 Teach your teen how to regulate anxiety**

If anxiety becomes too intense, it can be managed through controlled breathing. Explain to your teen that anxiety often causes quick, shallow breathing, which reinforces the feeling of panic. In contrast, deep, slow breathing sends a calming signal to the brain, helping to reduce anxiety. Research square breathing or diaphragmatic breathing with your teen and have them practice using these techniques when feeling anxious. With time, teens can learn to control their anxiety and prevent it from becoming overwhelming during tests.

With the right strategies, test anxiety can become a manageable challenge rather than a roadblock. By equipping teens with these tools, you're setting them up not just for academic success, but for greater confidence in all areas of life.

**See also:** [How to Study for a Test](#), [Encore: How Can I Help My Disorganized High School Kid?](#), [Teens and Sleep](#), with Journalist & Author Lisa L. Lewis