

# Relaxation Techniques

(adapted from West Virginia University)

[http://www.wvup.edu/academics/more\\_test\\_anxiety\\_tips.htm](http://www.wvup.edu/academics/more_test_anxiety_tips.htm)

There are both **short-term** and **long-term** relaxation response techniques that help control emotional (somatic) and worry (cognitive) test anxiety. Once these procedures are learned, the relaxation response will take the place of an anxiety response.

## Short Term Relaxation Techniques

### Tensing and differential relaxation method

1. Put your feet flat on the floor.
2. With your hands, grab underneath the chair.
3. Push down with your feet and pull up on your chair at the same time for about five seconds.
4. Relax for five to ten seconds.
5. Repeat the procedure two or three times.
6. Relax all your muscles except the ones that are actually used to take the test.

### Palming method

1. Close and cover your eyes using the center of the palms of your hands.
2. Prevent your hands from touching your eyes by resting the lower parts of your palms on your cheekbones and placing your fingers on your forehead. Your eyeballs must not be touched, rubbed or handled in any way.
3. Think of some real or imaginary relaxing scene. Mentally visualize this scene. Picture the scene as if you were actually there, looking through your own eyes.
4. Visualize this relaxing scene for one to two minutes.

### Deep Breathing

1. Sit straight up in your chair in a good posture position.
2. Slowly inhale through your nose.
3. As you inhale, first fill the lower section of your lungs and work your way up to the upper part of your lungs.
4. Hold your breath for a few seconds.
5. Exhale slowly through your mouth.
6. Wait a few seconds and repeat the cycle.

## Long Term Relaxation Techniques

### Negative self-talk

Negative self-talk is the negative statements you tell yourself before and during tests. Negative self-talk causes students to lose confidence and to give up on tests. Students need to change their negative self-talk to positive self-talk without making unrealistic statements.

During tests, positive self-talk can build confidence and decrease your test anxiety. Using positive self-talk before a test can help reduce your test anxiety and improve your grades.