

Objective: Students will consider how they can create similar conditions in low pressure and high pressure situations to consistently perform at their best and remain calm regardless of the task at hand or goal in mind.

Consistency helps to keep our emotions in check while we pursue our goals. A large reason why many students have trouble with test anxiety is because testing conditions are not a consistent part of their routine. If day to day classroom tasks become boring, easy, loose, and relaxed, it becomes a much different feeling than a high pressure exam day which might be difficult, intense, and stressful. Bouncing between those two drastically different feelings will interrupt your consistency and add to anxiety in the most important moments when you have to perform. To fix this, you will find ways to make regular classroom days feel more intense like an exam day, while also finding ways to be calm and relaxed during exam days. The closer these two types of tasks feel, the more consistent your performances will be and the more confident you will feel on test days.

Activity 1: You will create a list of ways that you can add to the intensity of your daily classroom routine to help mirror testing conditions. Then, you will create a list of ways that you can relax and find peace during high pressure testing days to help mirror daily classroom routines.

Daily Classroom Routine	Your Responses
How will you increase the intensity level of each class?	Examples: Sitting in the front, rewarding yourself/punishing yourself for class performance, try to get ahead in every subject
How will you motivate yourself to do your best in each class?	Examples: Music playlists, motivational quotes, advice from role models/mentors
How will you prevent boredom in each class?	Examples: Keeping it light/telling jokes, answering questions/participating

Test/Exam Routine	Your Responses
How will you calm your nerves before the test?	Examples: Keeping it light/telling jokes, listen to music, play cards
How will you reduce the level of stress you feel during the test?	Examples: Focusing on what you know, not worrying about the potential results, take notes/highlight directions
How will you deal with difficulties/surprises (a question you didn't expect on the test, something you do not know)	Examples: Finding confidence in answers you do know, making your best guess and not worrying about the outcome

One of the greatest strategies to eliminate distractions, reduce stress, and focus on the present moment is deep breathing. Whether you are dealing with the hardest test you have ever seen, or the most boring classroom lecture you have ever sat in, deep breathing will give you the determination and focus needed to continue performing at your highest levels. Deep breathing also relaxes you, which is an important factor in reducing test/classroom anxiety and displaying your best work. Here are some key elements of deep breathing:

1. Understand that relaxation is your body's natural state. You don't need to try to relax, you must simply allow it.
2. Close your eyes so you can focus only on your breath.
3. Breathe deeply through your abdomen, not in your chest.
4. Breathe in through your nose and release your breath through your mouth.
5. Repeat 3-5 times in a row to clear your mind and allow yourself to reset.
6. Have an image in your mind that relaxes you. It could be a place that brings you happiness (your room, the beach, a vacation spot) or a thing that reminds you to be at peace (A flower garden, a group of people meditating, a musical instrument).

Activity 2: Create your relaxation image. Every time you breathe deeply to relax yourself and refocus during classes/tests, you will use this image to help you stay calm and centered.