

## DOING YOUR BEST ON A TEST

By Donna Henderson, AP, RN

Test time is here again. Many people get freaked out about taking a test and hardly anyone enjoys them. There are a lot of ways to prepare and test well. Here are some ideas you may be able to use for your next exam.

Tests are tools to show your skill to put things down on paper, not who you are as a person. If you are frightened, worried or sick your best will not be reflected as it would be otherwise. Other interfering factors include fatigue, poor diet, emotional concerns and other distractions. The following are some ideas which have helped many students.

See yourself as a success. Visualize it clearly. See yourself confidently entering the classroom, sitting down, relaxing, putting your best answers on the paper, turning it in proudly and walking out of the class relaxed and poised. The more detail you can bring into your visualization, the more real it becomes for you. Add sounds and smells. This is a powerful tool people have used to improve their performance in athletics and speeches as well.

Eat foods that are nourishing like vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and healthy protein sources. Chew thoroughly to allow maximum assimilation of micronutrients. Keep your brain hydrated with plenty of water and avoid caffeine, which dehydrates you. Avoid simple sugars because your blood sugar tends to rise quickly, but also drop quickly, leaving you tired and hungry again.

Try to find relevance of what you are studying for the future. It helps if you have incentive to learn these concepts. If you can't see any reason to learn this, ask your teacher to shed some light on it.

Use games to remember. Word games help like using the first letter of a series of words to make another word. Another is to make a poem out of the material or put it to music in a song. Visual cues help especially when you're trying to remember a series of words. For instance if you wanted to remember fire, door, dog, roof, grass in that order, you could make up a visual story with a fire catching a door on fire, then a dog jumping through the door and getting on a roof that sloped gently down to the grass. The more active your story is, the easier it is to remember.

Study in short increments. No more than an hour at a time. Take breaks to move and circulate your energy. Deep breathing can be done anytime to bring more oxygen to the brain. Rubbing your ears helps your whole body. Gentle taps on the top of your head has been shown to increase clear headedness. Better yet, start at the little toe and gently tap all the way up your legs and torso up to the head. Chinese call that a way to get "clear yang" to rise to the head. Qi Gong and Tai Qi are excellent ways to promote positive calm brain activity.

The night before a test a gentle back massage by a parent or friend can help calm your energy and promote restful sleep. Sleep well. Wake and reaffirm you success and relaxed attitude.

There is a technique called Emotion Free Technique, which can also help with concerns. Find a tender spot on you upper chest and rub it gently while you say three times: "Even though I feel \_\_\_\_\_(frightened, worried, tired,

etc.), I choose to relax and do my best or I deeply and completely love and accept myself. Use whatever wording seems right to you. More information is available at [www.emofree.com](http://www.emofree.com).

Before the test, use the restroom, so you're not distracted by that, drink some water and tap on your head.

During the test, relax, be comfortable, have supplies handy, remember your visualization being confident. If there are questions you have no clue on, you might choose to skip that one for now and mark it so you can go back to it when you have finished the rest of the test. If you have time, recheck your work, especially on the ones you question. If you eliminate some of the multiple choice answers that you think are wrong, you have a better chance to get it right.

Afterward, no matter what the score, remember that you did well. Learn from any mistakes, but don't stew over them. Congratulate yourself. Look in the mirror and say, "I love you" as many times as necessary until you really feel it. You are unique and your gift to the world can be more honored as you recognize the wonder of who you are.

For more information, contact Donna Henderson, AP, RN at 473-9304 or 352-222-1679.