`**[Adapted from MIT Mastering Tests: Test Anxiety](http://web.mit.edu/uaap/learning/test/anxiety.html)**

Preparing for and taking exams is stressful by definition. Your challenge is to channel that stress constructively and avoid letting it become anxiety—unfocused worry.

Here are a few techniques for managing exam stress.

1) **Create a study plan and stick to it.** Planning ahead puts you in charge, and not the calendar. Being in charge makes most of us happy.

2) **Eat and sleep well.** These are essential, not just on the day of the test, but every day. Health and happiness go hand in hand.

3) **Relieve stress, don't avoid it.** Have you ever watched television, intending to unwind, and found yourself under incredible internal pressure to return to your work?

You need more than a distraction: you need to **play that stress away.** Go swimming or lift weights, do some yoga or meditate, take a long walk or do some volunteer work off campus. These activities use different parts of your brain and funnel stress out through your muscles.

4) **Ignore your inner critic.** Imagine if someone came into your room while you were studying and said, "I don't know why you are bothering to do this. You are so far behind that you will never catch up. It's utterly hopeless." You would never tolerate this treatment from another person; yet when that little voice inside your head begins berating you, it has the sound of authority. Recognize these thoughts for what they are, feelings of fear and self-doubt. Yes, you have a lot of work to do, but you most certainly can do it.

5) **Remember to ask for help if you need it.** Many kinds of academic support exist at CCA. ([TOPS](http://www.ccatutoring.com/about-top.html), teachers, study groups, classmates, review sessions)