

Problem with Math Anxiety?

Mathematics at



[math home](#) | [courses](#) | [prerequisites](#) | [faculty](#) | [FAQ](#) | [site map](#)

The Counseling Department at NVCC-Loudoun periodically offers a workshop on Math Anxiety. Below is the handout the participants receive that include several resources to help with Math Anxiety.

Math Study Skills: Diagnostic Inventory

(from *The Study Skills Workbook*, third edition, by Dr. Carolyn H. Hopper)

Rate your achievement of the following statements by writing:

3 for always

2 for sometimes

1 for almost never

0 if you have never even thought about doing what the statement says.

Selecting a Math Class

- | | |
|----|---|
| 1. | I schedule my math class at a time when I am mentally sharp. |
| 2. | When I register for a math class, I chose the best instructor for me. |
| 3. | If I have a choice, I select a math class that meets three or four days a week instead of one or two. |
| 4. | I schedule the next math class as soon as possible after I have completed the current course. |
| 5. | I am sure that I have signed up for the correct level math course. |

Time and Place for Studying Math

- | | |
|-----|--|
| 6. | I study math every day. |
| 7. | I try to do my math homework immediately after math class. |
| 8. | I have a specific time to study math. |
| 9. | I have a specific place, with few distractions, to study math. |
| 10. | I do my math homework with my tutor so I can get help. |
| 11. | I am careful to keep up to date with my math homework. |
| 12. | I study math at least eight to ten hours a week. |

Study Strategies for Math Class

- | | |
|-----|--|
| 13. | I read the section in my textbook before it is discussed in class. (MUSCLE read it.) |
| 14. | If I have trouble understanding the textbook, I find an alternate text. |
| 15. | I take notes in math class. |
| 16. | I am careful to copy all the steps of math problems in my notes. |
| 17. | I ask questions when I am confused. |

	18.	I go to the instructor, Math Center or my tutor when I am confused.
	19.	I try to determine exactly when I got confused and exactly what confused me. (NOT "I don't get any of this stuff.")
	20.	I review my notes and text before beginning homework.
	21.	I work problems until I understand them, not just until I get the right answer.
	22.	I use flash cards for formulas and vocabulary.
	23.	I develop memory techniques to remember math concepts.
Math Tests		
	24.	I preview the test before I begin.
	25.	Before I begin taking a test, I make notes on the test of things such as formulas that I might need or forget.
	26.	I begin with the easy questions first.
	27.	I take the full amount of time allotted for the test.
	28.	I carefully check as many problems as possible before I turn in my test.
	29.	When my test is returned, I keep a log of the types of mistakes I made on the test: concept errors, application errors, types of careless errors, etc.
	30.	I keep up to date with my studying so that I don't have to cram the night before a test.
Dealing with Anxiety		
	31.	I believe that I can succeed in math class.
	32.	I have study partners in my math class.
	33.	I take practice tests.
	34.	I know several good relaxation techniques.
	TOTAL SCORE	

Scoring:

- 90 - 102 Give yourself an A. You are using the study skills you need in order to be successful in math.
- 80 - 89 Give yourself a B. You are using good math study skills. Choose a few strategies to work on each day, and you will be well on your way to an A.
- 70 - 79 Give yourself a C. Your study skills are average. If you want an A, choose one or two strategies in each category to work on until you are using most of the strategies described above.
- Below 70 You are probably having a difficult time in math class. But the math itself may not be your trouble! More that likely, your main problem is the study strategies you are using (or not using). *Make* yourself do the things on the list above.

Some Ways that Math is Different from Other Subjects:

1. Math requires different study processes. In other courses, you learn and understand the material, but you do not always have to apply it. You have to apply the math in each assignment.
2. Math involves a linear learning process. What you learn one day is used the next, and so forth. You cannot "coast" during any of the topics.
3. Math is much like a foreign language. It needs to be practiced EVERY day, and often the vocabulary is unfamiliar.
4. Math in college is different from math in high school. In high school, you may have math class every day but only two or three times a week in college. And what took 36 weeks to learn in high school is now covered in only 15 weeks. Much of the learning takes place outside of the classroom, through your preparation and homework.

Reasons for Math Anxiety:

1. People do not have confidence in their abilities. You need to experience small successes to begin building confidence in yourself.
2. People don't try to understand; they just memorize.
3. People often do not prepare for math class or for tests. Avoid trying to "wing" it.

Some ways to study for math exams:

1. Start on Day One--Do EVERY homework assignment.
2. Use flash cards for formulas and vocabulary
3. Use the chapter summary, review section and practice test found at the end of each chapter in your textbook.
4. Rework problems you missed on the homework or on quizzes. Make a list of any that you cannot correct and ask your instructor or tutor.
5. Complete practice tests.

Ways to study for Math class:

1. Do not study just for tests; study for each day of class.
2. Keep up-review notes after class.
3. Take thorough notes. Write everything from the board on paper.
4. READ the textbook. MUSCLE read it. If you don't understand it, get help
5. Find a study friend from your class.
6. Have a set time for completing your math homework. Treat it as a scheduled class.

Math Anxiety Code of Responsibilities by Kathy Acker

1. I have the responsibility to attend all classes and do all homework as assigned.
2. I have the responsibility to recognize the rights of others to learn at their own pace.
3. I have the responsibility to seek extra help when necessary.
4. I have the responsibility to see the teacher during office hours or to schedule an appointment for assistance.
5. I have the responsibility to come to class prepared; homework finished and/or questions to ask.
6. I have the responsibility to speak up when I don't understand.
7. I have the responsibility to give math at least the same effort I give to other subjects.
8. I have the responsibility to begin my math study at my current skill level.
9. I am responsible for my attitudes about my abilities.
10. I have the responsibility to learn about instructors prior to registering for class.
11. I have the responsibility for learning and practicing relaxation skills.
12. I have the responsibility to act as a competent adult.
13. I have the responsibility to approach math with an open mind rather than fighting it.
14. I have the responsibility to be realistic about my goals and expectations.

Student's Math Anxiety Bill of Rights by Sandra Davis

I have the right to learn at my own pace and not feel put down or stupid if I'm slower than someone else.
I have the right to ask whatever questions I have.
I have the right to need extra help.
I have the right to ask a teacher or tutor for help.
I have the right to say I don't understand.
I have the right to not understand.
I have the right to feel good about myself regardless of my abilities in math.
I have the right not to base my self-worth on my math skills.
I have the right to view myself as capable of learning math.
I have the right to evaluate my math instructors and how they teach.
I have the right to relax.
I have the right to be treated as a competent person.
I have the right to dislike math.
I have the right to define success in my own terms.

Resources used for this presentation:

Books (these are available for your use in the Counseling Center.)

Essential Study Skills by Linda Wong, second edition
Practicing College Study Skills by Carolyn H. Hopper
Becoming a Master Student by Dave Ellis

Web Sites:

www.mathpower.com
www.mathanxiety.net

For additional Reading on the WWW:

<http://www.mathacademy.com/pr/minitext/anxiety/>
<http://www.mtsu.edu/~devstud2/anxiety.html>
<http://www.counsel.ufl.edu/selfHelp/mathConfidence.asp>

Books available for purchase from www.amazon.com:

Overcoming Math Anxiety by Sheila Tobias
Conquering Math Anxiety: A Self-Help Workbook By Cynthia Arem
Math Study Skills Workbook: Your guide to Reducing Test Anxiety and Improving Study Strategies by Paul Nolting
The Book for Math Empowerment, by Sandra L. Manigault
Math Anxiety Reduction by Robert Hackworth
Fear of Math: How to Get Over It and Get on With Your Life by Claudia Zaslavsky
Math Curse by Jon Scieszka

Click here for : [Available resources at Northern Virginia Community College, Loudoun campus](#)

[▲ Top of page](#)

[NVCC home](#) | [NVCC-Loudoun home](#)

Contact: jserbousek@nvcc.edu
or [webteam](#)

Last modified: January 10, 2003