NAME..... DATE.....

TEST READINESS–DEEP BREATHING

When your teacher tells you that it's time for a test, do you sometimes feel nervous? Being a little bit nervous is normal. As a matter of fact, being a little nervous is good because it helps you pay attention and focus. But being too nervous doesn't help at all. Being too nervous makes it nearly impossible to think.

When you become too nervous to do well on a test, this is called *test anxiety*. Test anxiety is a feeling of panic right before, during and even after a test. It makes it hard to pay attention, to think clearly and to do your best.

There are many different signs of test anxiety. Common signs include an upset stomach, headache, sweating, hot or cold feelings, dizziness and panic. When these feelings set in, it's hard to think. It's as if the brain freezes or the mind races. Either way, trying to come up with the right answers is very difficult.

Anyone can have test anxiety. The good news is that there is something you can do if it happens. Many students have found that using a simple deep-breathing exercise can make all the difference. The deep-breathing exercise is very easy. All you need to do is breathe in slowly through your nose, and then slowly breathe out through your mouth. Repeat this until you feel yourself calm down. For best results, practice deep-breathing every day (even when not taking a test). That way, when you need to calm down, you'll be able to focus on taking the test.

Try using deep breathing right before a test. That way, you will be in control of your thoughts and feelings from the start. Or, if you begin to notice your brain shutting down, take a short break to do the breathing exercise. That way, you'll be able to do your very best when taking a test.

Have you ever felt so nervous that you had trouble during a test? How do you think deep breathing might help? What do you think might happen to test scores if your classmates practiced deep breathing before taking a test?

»Discuss, Record and Share:

1. What happens when a student feels very nervous when taking a test?
2. What is test anxiety and what are the symptoms?
3. What is deep breathing and how does it help some people overcome test anxiety?
4. How might deep breathing help you get ready to take a test?

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