

TEN WAYS TO REDUCE MATH ANXIETY

1. You are not alone! Relax. Many people dislike and are nervous about math. Even mathematicians get that sinking, panicky feeling called “math anxiety” when they confront a new problem for the first time.
2. If you have math anxiety, admit it. If you pretend not to have it, you will not learn to overcome or manage it.
3. Directly attack your math anxiety by knowing your whole number math facts of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division. Face it: Math builds on itself. You have to go back and relearn that stuff. (Don’t use negative self-talk such as “I couldn’t learn it before. So I can’t learn it now.” Remember it’s never too late to learn. *Besides, you’re older now!* It’ll be much easier and quicker to learn this time.)
4. If you think you don’t know the basics, practice a little math each day. (*Do you think Big Papi learned how to hit a baseball just by watching?!*)
5. Ask questions! All the time! Some people think asking questions is a sign of weakness. It’s not. It’s a sign of strength! In fact, other students will be glad. (They have questions, too.)
6. Do math in a way that’s natural for you. There’s often more than one way to work a math problem. Maybe the instructor’s way stumps you at first. Don’t give up. Work to understand it your way! Then it will be easier to understand it the instructor’s way.
7. Notice your handwriting when you do math. The sloppier it gets, the more confused or angry you probably are. When it gets really sloppy, STOP! Look away for a few seconds. Then erase the messy parts. Start again. Try to not let your attitude interfere with learning math.
8. Don’t go by memory alone. Try to understand your math. Memorizing is a real trap. When you’re nervous, your memory is the first to go!
9. Trouble with the text? Ask your instructor to recommend another math book. Maybe a book in the library will explain things better.
10. Get help the same day you don’t understand. Everyone needs help now and then. Try to form a study group with friends. Two heads (or three) are better than one. Or see your instructor. Or get support at the Academic Achievement Center from an Academic Coach or a Peer Tutor.