
Succeeding in College Mathematics

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Mathematics Anxiety Level: 40-50 points

Your score indicates you have a high level of math anxiety. With a high level of math anxiety, your symptoms might include:

- an apprehension each time you go to class
- being afraid to ask questions in class or individually outside of the class
- being afraid that you might be called on to answer a question
- fearing math tests more than tests in other subjects
- feeling ok about material in class, but feeling lost once you leave class and are working on your own

If you experience most of these, you will probably need more assistance than this course can provide. Materials are available to help you overcome this level of math anxiety but realize that it will take persistence on your part.

1. SHSU offers several options to assist students. The counseling center is available to assist students in achieving their academic goals and it is staffed by trained professionals who are willing to listen to student needs and identify options that are available to help reduce anxiety. Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) is another option that offers services such as extended testing time and testing in an area with minimal distractions for students who qualify for these services.
2. *Winning at Math* by Paul Nolting PhD. is available through Amazon or other sources. The book addresses the different types of math anxiety as well as how it affects learning and different methods that can be used to lessen the impact of math anxiety. Chapters address ways to improve listening and note-taking, how to improve your study environment and time-management, how to maximize the effectiveness of doing homework, how to manage anxiety and take tests, and how to optimize your math learning strategies.
3. Discuss the situation with your instructor to see what suggestions they might have. As soon as you begin to feel stressed in your math course, contact your instructor and set up a time to sit down with them in person. Questions you might ask include suggestions the instructor might have on how to reduce your math anxiety, or ask what services are available that they would recommend. Also share with your instructor your history with math anxiety and what you have found helpful in the past to see if those activities or options are available in this situation.

Mathematics Anxiety Level: 30-39 points

Your score indicates that you probably have moderate math anxiety. Students with moderate math anxiety can benefit from options in the high anxiety level (40-50 points), but the following may be used depending on the student.

- *Relaxation and breathing techniques.* While sitting, focus on relaxing muscles that might be tense. Take several deep breaths, inhaling slowly and exhaling slowly. Close your eyes and think about a relaxing place.
- *Manage self-talk.* Thinking that you hate math or that you can't do math is part of what is causing you to procrastinate and avoid math. Think positively and focus on times when you have been successful. Positive self-talk such as telling yourself that you can do an assignment will lead you to work on it, the first step in successfully completing the work.

Mathematics Anxiety Level: 20-29 points

Your score indicates that you have a low level of mathematics anxiety. Students with a lower math anxiety can use the steps listed above but frequently have developed some coping activities to minimize their math anxiety. The activities below will help students at this level become stronger math students.

- *Ask questions.* Work to ask at least one question in class per week. This can be done by preparing the question in advance or during class if you need clarification of the topic, ask your question. If it is less intimidating, stop by the instructor's office to ask questions.
- *Work with a group of peers.* Organize or join a group of peers in the class. Keep it small – between 2 and 4 members. Set up a location and time where you can physically meet. Meeting online and exchanging information electronically is helpful, but face-to-face meetings allow you to get clarification rather than just answers. Also be sure you are a contributing member and don't just be in the group to take information

Mathematics Anxiety Level: 10-19 points

Your score indicates that you can probably set aside any mathematics anxiety that you feel. Students in this group tend to have a lower level of math anxiety. Although that might be the case, some of the suggestions above can still help you adjust to college level math courses. The suggestions in the 20-29-point area are helpful for all students and it is good to keep them in mind if you find after a few weeks of class that you begin struggling with the material.

NOTE: Realize that as situations change your math anxiety level can change. You might start the semester believing that your math anxiety level is low, but after the first test you may become concerned that your grade is much lower than you anticipated. That would be a good time to answer the questions again to see what questions might have an increased anxiety level. Take the time to go back and review the suggestions in the boxes above and make changes to your activities. Reversing an increased anxiety level requires action on your part.