

TEN WAYS TO CUT DOWN ON MATH ANXIETY

1. **You are not alone!** Relax. Many people dislike and are nervous about math. Even mathematicians are often unsure of themselves and get that sinking, panicky feeling called “math anxiety” when they first confront a new problem.
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. If you’re having math trouble, **practice a little math each day.** (Do you think Mozart learned how to play the piano, or Michael Jackson to dance, just by watching?)
4. **Ask questions.** 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.)
5. **Do math in a way that’s natural for you.** There’s often more than one way to work a math problem. Maybe the teacher’s way stumps you at first. Don’t give up. Work to understand it your way. Then it will be easier to understand the teacher’s way. Remember, “each mind has its own method.”
6. **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 not to let your attitude interfere with learning math.
7. **Know the basics.** Be sure you know your math from earlier grades. Maybe you missed something that time you moved in junior high. Face it: Math builds on itself. You have to go back and relearn that stuff. (Don’t think, “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 easier and quicker to learn.)
8. **Don’t go by memory alone.** Try to understand your math. Memorizing is a real trap. When you’re nervous, memory is the first to go.
9. **Get help.** Everyone needs help now and then. Try to form a study group with friends. Two heads (or three) are better than one. Or get a tutor. Or take a review course.
10. **Stay focused and positive.** It’s a question of attitude, not aptitude!