More advice on test anxiety

Dealing with thoughts:
1. Yell stop!
When you notice your thoughts are racing, cluttered with worries & fears, mentally yell, “stop!” This may help you break the cycle of worry, and then try the following steps.

2. Daydream
Fill your mind with pleasant thoughts, so there’s no room for anxiety.

3. Visualize success
Be specific in imagining what you want to see go right. It’ll increase the odds that you’ll live up to your good expectations (rather than dwelling on worst case scenarios).

4. Focus
Focus on a specific object, a tree, the scratches on your watch. During an exam, listen to the sound of the lights in the room, touch the surface of your desk and notice the texture. Concentrate all your attention on one point. Don’t leave room for anxiety-related thoughts.

5. Praise yourself
Talk to yourself in a positive way. “I am relaxed” “I am doing a great job on this test” etc.

6. Consider the worst
Consider the worst that could happen, to the point of absurdity. You may find you can then laugh it off. You may also find that life goes on even if the worst happens!

Dealing with feelings…
1. Breathe
Regular deep breaths can help you calm yourself.

2. Scan your body
Close your eyes and think through each muscle, deliberately relaxing each part of your body.

3. Tense and relax
If a particular part of your body is tense, make it more tense, then relax.

4. Use guided imagery
Relax and take a quick fantasy trip, such as being at the beach. With practice, you can even use this technique while you are taking a test.

5. Exercise aerobically
You can’t do this during the test, of course, but regular exercise will help you relax.

6. Get help
When these techniques don’t work, when anxiety is serious, get help. If you are feeling down for more than a few days, see a counselor.