# Calming Activities for Exams

There are many ways to help students settle their brains before exams. Every technique does not work for every student, and student needs can change from exam to exam. For example, sometimes they need to sit, while others they may need to move. The techniques below work best when used consistently, especially when incorporated into low stakes situations as practice for high stakes exams.

* Focus on the breath for 3-5 minutes
* Guided body Scan
	+ You can find many scripts for short breathing meditations or body scans. It’s important that you find one, or modify it, so that it feels right to you. There are also videos on YouTube that you could play until you’re comfortable leading the activity yourself.
* Stand up and shake, shake, shake (hands, arms, whatever body part feels right) for 1-2 minutes before sitting and focusing on the breath for 2-3 minutes
	+ I do this with the students and fully engage in feeling silly, too
* Draw anything, just get energy out on paper
	+ I’ve had students draw how they’re feeling right now, draw how they want to be feeling, draw an image of something that makes them smile, or just scribble
	+ Students keep the crayons (always crayons😊) during the exam to draw if they feel blocked on a question. This can help relieve overthinking that’s often the source of obstruction.
* Lollipops during exams
	+ Sucking on candy or chewing gum can relieve stress
* Positive affirmation or personal mantra
	+ Have students write it down so they can see it and repeat to themselves if feeling overwhelmed
* Strike a “power pose” before the exam
	+ Just fun to do!

Stacey Benton DVM

University of Cincinnati Blue Ash College Veterinary Technology Program

bentonsy@ucmail.uc.edu