Coping at Crunch Time

5 Keys to Crunch-time Success

1. **Time Management.** The single most important factor in coping at crunch-time is how you make use of your time. Effective time management is absolutely crucial to reducing anxiety and ensuring that you get your work done, especially if you’ve already procrastinated and you’re facing an overwhelming amount of work.

2. **It takes time to make time.** Time management isn’t something you simply resolve to do: it is a process that requires foresight and extensive planning. Initially, you will need to set aside at least 2-3 hours to organize yourself with a realistic schedule that makes effective use of your time.

3. **Identify time wasters.** We all have a set of tried, tested, and true methods for procrastinating when we’re under pressure. Surfing the net, watching TV, cleaning our rooms, reorganizing our book shelves, etc. It is important to identify the various ways that you waste time, write them down, and develop specific strategies for dealing with them.

4. **Think small.** In the immortal words of Mark Twain: “The secret of getting ahead is getting started. The secret of getting stared is breaking your complex overwhelming tasks into smaller manageable tasks, and then starting on the first one.” Instead of saving 50 pages of reading for one 5-hour long session on a Sunday night, plan ahead and read 10 pages per night over the course of 5 nights.

5. **Develop routines.** The best way to turn procrastination into productivity is through developing routines. Our bodies crave structure and stability, and consistent routines can help reduce anxiety while helping bolster our concentration and memory. First, keep a consistent sleep schedule in which you go to bed and wake up at the same time every day; second, eat regular meals at the same time every day; and third, develop reading and writing routines that force you to engage with smaller amounts of material on a more consistent basis. Getting into the routine of doing the same task at the same time each night helps to build valuable study momentum and prevent procrastination.