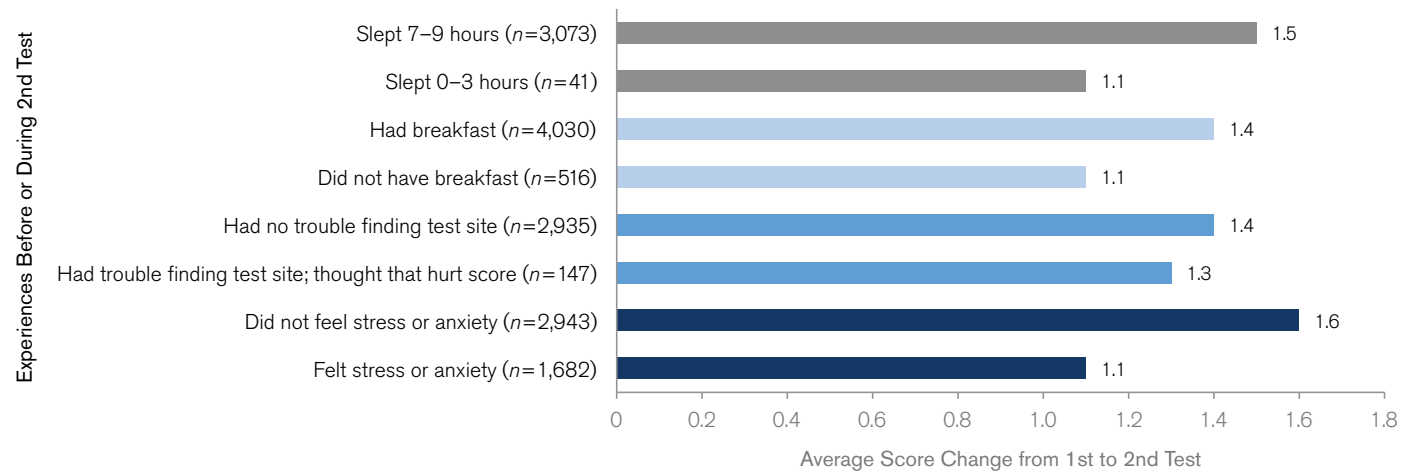


# Sleeping Well, Eating Breakfast, and Feeling Calm: How Students' Experiences Relate to ACT Scores

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## Composite Score Changes of Students Who Took the ACT on Two Occasions



Note: These findings are based on data from 9,654 students who took the ACT twice, either for the first time in spring 2012 and the second in fall 2012, or for the first time in fall 2012 and the second in spring 2013. The students also completed a survey of their test preparation activities.

We asked students, each of whom had taken the ACT® college readiness assessment twice, several questions about particular physical and emotional experiences they had that could have affected their test performance. The figure above illustrates several findings:

- Students who reported sleeping 7–9 hours the night before the second test earned ACT Composite scores that averaged about 1.5 points higher than their scores on the first test. This average score change is larger than the average Composite score change of 1.1 points for students who slept relatively little (0–3 hours) the night before the second test.
- Students who reported eating breakfast before the second test had larger average ACT Composite score changes (about

1.4 points) from the first to the second test than did students who reported not eating breakfast (1.1 points).

- Students who reported having no trouble finding the testing site for the second test slightly outperformed those who did have trouble and who also reported thinking that this experience hurt their test performance (average Composite score change of 1.4 vs. 1.3 points, respectively).
- Students who reported feeling so stressed or anxious while taking the second test that they believe it affected their performance had smaller average Composite score changes (1.1 points) than did those who reported not feeling this way (1.6 points). ■

Students who took the ACT twice had larger score changes from a first to a second test when they reported:

- sleeping 7–9 hours the night before the second test
- eating breakfast before the second test
- having no trouble finding the second test's testing site

Feeling stressed or anxious while taking the second test was associated with smaller score changes.