



Lines open Mon - Fri 10am - 6pm

0808 801 0338

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Exam Stress

Exams can be one of the most stressful things we go through. You can work hard throughout the year, but everything seems to hang on how you do in those couple of hours. The pressure to do well can be difficult to handle. Remember, exams aren't the only opportunity you'll have to prove yourself.

Revision tips

Sometimes people deal with exam stress by putting off revision. Try not to give into the temptation to avoid the issue, it can often lead to more stress and it limits your chances of doing really well. Organising your revision can really help with pressure and stress so read on for some tips on how to do it well!

- Plan your revision well! Start far enough in advance so that you don't spend hours and hours cramming in final few days before your exam.
- Structure it in a way that works for you. If you are a morning person, get the bulk of the work done then. If you are an evening person then make that your key revision time.
- Remember to schedule time to revise your least favourite topics; they may well be what you need to revise more of!
- Don't spend all your time revising- allowing time to rest can help you stay calm and get the most out of your study times. Eating regular meals and doing physical activity also helps.
- Make sure you take plenty of breaks- this helps your memory and levels of attention. On your breaks do something positive like talking to friends or getting outside for some fresh air.
- Ask if there are any past exam papers. You can use these to practice planning and answering questions.
- Discuss anything you don't understand with your teachers, tutors or lecturers. You may be worrying out of proportion and they can help you see what you should be doing more clearly.
- Set yourself small goals and reward yourself when you achieve them.

The night before...

The night before an important exam can be the most stressful one. It can be tempting to cram late in to the night going over what might just come up in the exam.

- Remind yourself of exactly when and where the exam will be.
- Do something relaxing and enjoyable- you've worked really hard until now so taking a break will revitalise you for the big day.
- Make sure you get an early night. Don't worry if it takes you a while to get to sleep- if you got to bed early you'll still get enough sleep to leave you alert and ready to concentrate the next day.



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On the day

- On the day, ensure you have everything you need and TRY to eat something. Take a drink and a snack in with you as well.
- Make sure you leave plenty of time to get to the exam- rushing can really get your stress levels up.
- Read through all the questions and take your time. Stick to your time plans and remember that you can always go back to something you weren't sure about.
- Relax after each exam, don't go straight back into revising. When you've had your last exam you can properly chill out although it may take a few days to get used to not revising again – what a great feeling!

Basic relaxation techniques

There are a variety of relaxation techniques you can try to help yourself, have a look on the net or browse your local bookshop or library to find out more.

Here's one of the most popular techniques:

- Find somewhere quiet and peaceful where you won't be disturbed, it doesn't matter if you are sitting up or lying down, as long as you are comfortable.
- You are going to slowly tense and relax each part of your body. Start by scrunching up your toes then releasing them, do this three times before moving on to the next part of your body.
- Work your way slowly up through your body, tensing and relaxing each part.
- When you have worked your way up to your head tense and relax the whole of your body.

Sounds strange but it works! Be careful if you have any injuries or muscle sprains – you might want to ask your doctor what the best technique would be.

You may also find that learning breathing techniques helps, especially if you are feeling panicky. You need to try and breathe slowly, in through your nose and out through your mouth. You also need to be breathing from your diaphragm, so watch that it's your stomach moving more than your chest.

More info

www.anxietyuk.org.uk/condition_yp_exam.php

www.mind.org.uk/help/diagnoses_and_conditions/exam_stress

www.breathingspacescotland.co.uk

www.rethink.org/young_people

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