

## Exam Stress



**Being under pressure is a normal part of life. However if you find yourself becoming overwhelmed by stress, these feelings could start to be a problem for you.**

A little bit of stress can be a good thing, as it motivates us to knuckle down and work hard. But exams can make stress levels get out of hand, which can stop us from performing at our best.

See the following DOs & DON'Ts that can help you beat exam stress:

- **DO: Make a revision timetable.** Organise your revision into small chunks and form a plan for each day. This will help avoid any dilemmas at the start of the day about what to work on.

**DON'T: Set yourself unrealistic goals.** Nobody can revise 10 topics in a day! Avoid setting the day up to be a disappointment.

**TIP:** Use apps to temporarily block social media sites so you don't get distracted (e.g. SelfControl, Cold Turkey).

- **DO: Make sure you schedule time to do things you enjoy.** Nobody can work all day every day, you deserve time off - go to the cinema, see your friends, spend time with your family.

**DON'T: Cut all enjoyment from your life.** The most productive brain is a rested brain!

- **DO: Take regular breaks.** Psychologists say we can only concentrate properly for 35 - 40 minutes at a time.

**DON'T: Chain yourself to your desk.** Spend your break doing something completely different to sitting at your desk.

**TIP:** Do some exercise - nothing de-stresses the mind faster than physical activity!

- **DO: Eat well & drink lots of water throughout the revision/exam period.** Have proper breakfasts – fuel your brain and body.

**DON'T: Load up on stimulants such as caffeine, alcohol and drugs.** These will hinder your energy and concentration in the long term.

**TIP:** Slow-release foods like bread, rice, pasta, fruit and veg, to keep blood sugars level – this will help to avoid highs and lows of energy.

- **DO: Sleep!** Try to get about 8 hours' sleep a night.

**TIP:** Wind down before you go to bed – have a warm bath, listen to a relaxation CD, read a book (for pleasure rather than work!) or listen to the radio.

- **DO: Avoid comparing yourself to your friends** - both during revision and after you've taken your exams. Everyone approaches revision in different ways, so just make sure you've chosen the method that works best for you.

**DON'T: Be put off by your friends saying they do huge amounts of revision a day** – in reality that's probably not true, or isn't actually working for them.

**TIP:** Once you've done an exam, try to forget about it rather than discussing who put what for every question. It's too late to change your answers & worrying won't help.

- **DO: Keep everything in perspective.** It's true when they say 'exams aren't everything' – although it may not seem that way now. Whatever happens in your exams, you can still be successful in life afterwards. (Employers look at more than just your grades – they're interested in your attitude, practical and people skills too!)

**DON'T: Forget that your exams are just a small part of who you are.** Exam success does not define you, you are so much more.

**TIP:** Talk to someone you trust if you're feeling really worried and stressed. It helps to vent! And they may be able to suggest some practical ways to help you deal with the stress.

**The following organisations can offer you more help if you need it:**

- Childline helpline: **0800 1111** web: [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)
- Samaritans web: [www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)

**And here are some links to other helpful webpages:**

- [Mind: 14 Ways to Beat Exam Stress](#)
- [NHS: Tips on Surviving Exams](#)

- **Childline: Exam Stress and Pressure**
- **BBC: Exam Stress**
- **Student Minds: Exam Stress**