

Exam Stress

Exams are bound to be stressful due to what is at stake. You may have expectations placed on you from yourself, your family or your school to achieve a certain standard. If you are applying for college or university, you may be required to achieve certain grades to secure your place. There may also be other things going on in your life that are putting you under more pressure, like moving home, relationship problems, or changes to your family structure. It is important to remember that you can't get rid of stress altogether, and while too much stress can be harmful, when controlled at the right level it can actually help you to perform better. Everybody is different and what is too stressful for one person may be stimulating for the next person.

- How to Minimize Exam Stress

There are several simple steps that you can take to help yourself to minimize exam stress:

Be organised - Find out exactly what you're facing and work out a plan; Get hold of the right information from the start; Make sure your notes are up to date; Catch up on anything you've missed; Find out about the resources available.

Plan a timetable - Start your revision in plenty of time; Plan a timetable that is realistic; Balance revision with other demands on your time; Identify your best time of day for studying; Allow more time for things you find most difficult; Allow time for relaxing.

Take time to relax – Exercise; Relaxation/breathing techniques; Complimentary therapies; Take a bath; Read a book; Find out what works for you!

Exercise - Regular exercise is an excellent way of coping with stress; As little as 10-20 minutes a day can make a big difference; Do something you enjoy; Exercise with friends.

Eat well - Changing your diet can improve how you feel; Reduce your caffeine intake – soft drinks, coffee, chocolate; Cut down on saturated fats; Try to eat plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables; Drink plenty of water.

Sleep well - Try to go to bed at the same time every night; Avoid heavy meals late at night; Cut down on caffeine; Exercise regularly; Make sure you have time to unwind before bed; Take a warm bath.

