

Wellbeing during exams



Exams can be an extremely challenging and stressful time. If you're struggling to manage your mood or anxiety levels, don't keep it to yourself. Talk to someone – family members, friends, your teachers and support staff.

Stress-busting relaxation techniques

Mindfulness

Be mindful – be more aware of the present moment, including your thoughts and feelings, your body and the world around you. Some people call this awareness "mindfulness". It can positively change the way you feel about life and how you approach challenges.

Pause

Make time to take breaks or pauses. Pausing throughout the day can prevent stress from building up.

- * Stop what you are doing.
- * Look out of the window.
- * Let your shoulders drop.
- * Stretch.
- * Allow your mind to calm down.

Deep breathing

Taking deep breaths after a stressful situation and concentrating on your breathing can have a calming effect and help you relax.

- * Close your eyes.
- * Take deep breaths in and out.
- * Think of your favourite place, maybe somewhere that you go on holiday.
- * Focus on the place and picture yourself there.
- * What can you see? What can you smell? What can you feel?

Imagining being in your favourite place can take you away from your current stressful situation and help you relax and calm down. It can also help prevent stress levels gradually rising throughout the day.

Don't work non-stop

You will **BURN OUT** before your exams even start!

Exercise

Exercise increases your heart rate and releases endorphins that make you feel good.

Watch a film or read a book

Escapism is a great way to switch off from reality and help your mind relax.

Rest

Listen to your body. If your body needs rest, then rest. Allow yourself time alone to recharge. Reflect on your tasks and your thoughts.

Meet a friend

Leave a stressful situation and spend some time with a friend. Talking things over, having some laughs and hearing a different perspective can take your mind off things and help you wind down. Maybe revise together.

Switch off the screens

Turn off your phone, tablet and computer and go and do something that doesn't involve tech gadgets instead. Apps like 'HOLD' or stop you accessing your phone for a certain time period while earning rewards.

Sleep

Good sleep is important for your mental health.

- * Write down your thoughts before going to sleep, or tomorrow's to-do list.
- * Put a note pad by the bed to record any last minute thoughts.
- * Use an app like 'Calm', which helps you to clear your mind before going to sleep.
- * Listen to soothing music.

Exam Self-care

Pressure to do well in exams can be overwhelming and affect your mental health. Exam stress can cause you to feel anxious or depressed, and this might affect your sleeping or eating habits.

While revising for exams, we're often advised to take time out and look after our mental health. But how can we do this?

It sounds obvious, but make sure you're drinking enough water and eating regular meals - it can be tempting to eat at your desk to maximise study time, but you'll work more effectively if you use meal times as a way to get away from your study space.

Remember that everybody has different study patterns and energy levels, so try not to worry that you're not doing enough work. Keep in mind that people might exaggerate the amount of time they claim to be working for!

If you're struggling to manage your mood or anxiety levels, don't keep it to yourself. Friends and family members can be a great source of support, and there's no shame in seeking professional help. YoungMinds have plenty of information about how to get support for your mental health, so you don't need to suffer in silence.

Above all, remember that exams aren't everything. There are many options that don't rely on getting the top grades and in ten years' time, most people won't care or notice what grades you got when you were younger. You are not defined by your exam results - you are so much more than the letters that appear on a sheet of paper.

YOUNGMINDS

The advice above is taken from the 'Young Minds' website, a charity leading the fight for a future where all young minds are supported and empowered, whatever the challenges, making sure they get the best possible mental health support and have the resilience to overcome life's difficulties.

For more information, visit <https://youngminds.org.uk/blog/exam-self-care/> or follow one of the many links on Isca Academy's website <https://iscaexeter.co.uk/student-support/mental-health-and-wellbeing/>

"The only person you are destined to become is the person you decide to be."

Ralph Waldo Emerson

"There is no passion to be found playing small - in settling for a life that is less than the one you are capable of living."

Nelson Mandela

"No matter what people tell you, words and ideas can change the world."

Robin Williams