
EXAM STRESS Solutions

8 WEEK
EXAM COUNTDOWN GUIDE

★ PLENTY OF TIME TO
PREPARE YOUR MIND ★

THIS GUIDE

All the techniques and activities recommended, help calm stress and reduce anxiety. Combined with your revision, they will help you to prepare for your exams and give you the optimum chance of achieving your best grades.

Some skills take a few weeks practice for you to be able to use them effectively, and some activities take a short time to take effect. Try them all, pick your favourite one or two and start practicing them daily.

Come exam time you will feel the benefits from having tried, learned and practiced them.



STAR TIPS TO TRY



One study identified that students who kept hydrated, and took water in to exams, scored an average 5% higher than students who didn't.



At stressful times the body and brain require many trace minerals, such as magnesium and thiamin (Vitamin B complex), to function effectively. Trace minerals are found in fresh whole foods and breakfast cereals. Speak to a pharmacist or Dr regarding vitamin and mineral supplements if you wish. Also, reduce caffeine and sugar consumption (both of which create stress in the body and mind).



Meditation and mindfulness techniques both help to slow the breathing and regulate the heart beat. You cannot enter a panic state and slow breathe at the same time. Learn how to control your breath and slow your heart rate now, so when you get into exams you can remain calm and allow your brain to work at it's optimum.

8 WEEKS UNTIL EXAMS



Declutter your bedroom and study space. Clutter is a big distraction to concentration. Bin or donate items that do not inspire you or bring you joy. No one would want you to keep a gift that you didn't like.



Try listening to a guided relaxation meditation. They last 6mins-30mins, you decide how long. Try lots, find one you like, download to your phone & listen daily.



Make sure you are eating the most nutrient dense foods you can. Fresh fruit and whole foods rather than processed foods. At stressful times the body and brain require many trace minerals to function effectively. Trace minerals are found in fresh whole foods. Try fortified breakfast cereals as a revision snack.



The body is approx 75% water. The brain is approx 85% water. Being just 1/2 litre dehydrated can increase your cortisol levels (cortisol is a stress hormone), affecting your mood and focus.



Like computers that stop working properly, everyone benefits from unplugging for a short while. Find a daily activity such as walking / sport that will help you unplug, release feel good hormones and help you sleep well at night. Just 20mins will make a difference.



Try a breathing meditation. It just takes you and your breath. The benefits can be felt within a couple of minutes. When breathing to relax remember letting go by breathing out long and slow is the most important bit! So focus on breathing out.



Try practicing mindfulness. Pick an activity - eating / walking / breathing and focus all of your senses on the experience. Alternatively find a 'guided body scan' (bit like a guided meditation) and listen to that.



You need 8-10hrs sleep every night. Too little sleep may cause :

- Impaired memory & thought process, affecting revision & learning
- Low mood / depression, not good if you're already feeling exam stressed
- Decreased immune response, remember you need to be as healthy as possible come exam time

4 WEEKS UNTIL EXAMS



Clutter draws our attention away from what our focus should be on. When stressed our attention is often easily diverted into activities such as tidying when we should be studying. If you haven't already, get your study space clear and tidy now.



Listen at least once daily to your guided relaxation meditation. If you are also using a breathing meditation practice it for a couple of minutes through out the day. It is the practice of meditation that provides you with the benefits and develops your skill.



Get active. The body is designed to move and when it doesn't, physical and mental tension is created. Exercise returns stress hormones (such as cortisol) to normal levels and helps regulate your immune system. Exercise and physical activity makes the body produce endorphins, which improve your mood and help you sleep.



Brain cells need x2 more energy than other cells in the body. Sufficient water is essential for this process. Sipping water to stay hydrated keeps your stress levels down and helps with concentration. Dehydration may cause fuzzy short-term memory, experience problems with focusing, and struggles with higher reasoning, such as doing math computations.



Downtime is essential. Unplug from devices and relax by reading for pleasure, or you may want to spend time writing your feelings out in a journal. It can help you find a new viewpoint on something bothering you. Alternatively start a daily gratitude journal - write down 3 things a day you are grateful for.



Lack of sleep may contribute to excessive worrying. People who are naturally more inclined to worry are more vulnerable to the impact of insufficient sleep. If you are struggling to sleep, try increasing the amount of exercise you are doing. This will reduce stress hormones (cortisol), increase feel good hormones (endorphins) and help your body and mind to relax.

1 WEEK UNTIL EXAMS



Listen at least once daily to your guided relaxation meditation. If you are also using a breathing meditation, practice it for a couple of minutes throughout the day. Practicing meditation will help you to relax and feel calm.



Sip water throughout the day for optimal brain function, your brain does not have any way to store water. If you feel stressed you may be over-breathing which is normal, but remember you lose water as you exhale. When you are dehydrated brain function is affected. You will think faster, be more focused and experience greater clarity and creativity when you are sufficiently hydrated.



Drinking fizzy drinks / juice / coffee / milk does not provide the same level of hydration that water does.



Keep taking regular exercise (any 20min of physical activity including walking) to burn off excess nervous energy and restore stress hormones to normal. Increase your endorphin levels by taking time to laugh with friends and family - or watch a comedy to relax.



Epsom salt baths are a great way to restore magnesium levels. You can buy them cheaply from a local chemist. They help relax muscles (after hard exercise) and provide your brain with an important trace mineral it uses more of in times of stress. Alternatively eat broccoli / almonds / cashews / kidney beans / sea foods to increase magnesium levels, or seek medical advice from a pharmacist if you wish to take mineral supplements.



We will be highlighting and demonstrating techniques on our website and Facebook page in the weeks before the exams.

Come along and take a look at what other techniques you can use to calm your nerves and reduce your stress.

WANT MORE SUPPORT?...

If you would like to know more about managing stress, what different types of meditations there are, what mindfulness activities might work best for you, or what reflexology points will help you relax, come and join us on our Facebook page.

As the weeks countdown to exam time we will be posting updates, tips and examples of lots more activities in addition to the advice offered in this guide.

Just so you know, we offer practical Exam Stress Management sessions which we deliver to groups in schools. Alternatively we also offer 1:1 support to individuals who may be struggling. Please contact us for more information.



Exam Stress (community)

www.examstresssolutions.com

Exam Stress Solutions is an Enterprising Youth CIC project



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