

Exam tips

There is no magic formula that can ensure you do well in exams. Pressure can motivate you, but if it's getting to you, you can do something about that. Effective study before the exam is important. There are also strategies you can employ on the day to help you do as well as possible and stay on-track through the exam itself.

Dealing with pressure

Doing exams, especially big ones, is a high-stress situation, and no matter how laid-back or well prepared you are, you'll probably feel the pinch as exam day approaches. If you, or, people close to you, have high expectations it could translate into pressure on you. For some people, pressure is a great motivating force, but it can be damaging.

You can keep pressure in check by:

- › *Taking time for yourself - exercise, listen to music or play video games to give yourself some space away from study-land.*
- › *Talking to positive people who aren't pressuring you. They could be family, friends, a counsellor or doctor.*
- › *Expressing your feelings by writing them down, talking to someone, or punching your pillow (or another SOFT object that doesn't have feelings of its own).*

Studying effectively

Exams are easier if you go in well prepared, so studying effectively is important. People learn differently, and what works for others might not work for you. Find a way that suits your personality.

Some good general tips are:

- › *Have a clean, organised area to study in*
- › *Find out what the exam content is likely to be, and study that*
- › *Make lists of small, manageable study tasks, and work through them*
- › *Try to ignore, or switch off, distractions like phones, social networks and email.*
- › *We know it's hard - most adults still haven't mastered this!*
- › *Get copies of past exams and practice with them*
- › *Study in groups if you find it helps*
- › *Revise and re-learn things you've already studied - that'll help it sink in*
- › *Try not to procrastinate (too much!)*

On the day

The best way to avoid exam-day stress is being well prepared. But exams are high-pressure occasions, and you might need more than knowledge to see you through.

This will be useful if...

- › *You're going to be taking exams soon*
- › *You want tools to deal with pressure and expectations*
- › *You're looking for effective study tips*
- › *You want tools to help you stay calm and focused in exams situations*

You can make them easier by:

- › *Giving yourself time to relax for a night or two beforehand so you're fresh*
- › *Using reading time to read through the whole exam (or at least the questions that will require medium to long answers, like essays)*
- › *Planning your time, question-by question, and sticking to it*
- › *Knocking off easy questions first, and hopefully leaving yourself extra time for hard ones*
- › *Breathing deeply and remembering what you've learned before you go in to the exam*
- › *Realising that the exam is probably not as life-changingly important as it seems to you, or other people with expectations of you*

Take action...

- › *Make sure you treat yourself when the exam is done*
- › *Try and organise study meetings with your friends, a problem shared is a problem halved*
- › *If the stress is getting too much, talk to your teacher or school counsellor*