

EXAM STRESS

At some point in our lives, we have to take exams. At school, college, university, even learning to drive – there is no escaping them. For **some** people it's no big deal, but for **a lot of us**, exams are extremely stressful.

But stress is not all bad. It is the emotion that gives us a rush of adrenaline to make us bother to learn. Without it, none of us would sit down to revise. Stress helps to motivate us and raise our game when faced with challenges. But it is a fine line – too much stress causes us to get anxious and tense, we start to panic and struggle to stay focused.



Feeling Tired, Frustrated, Down?

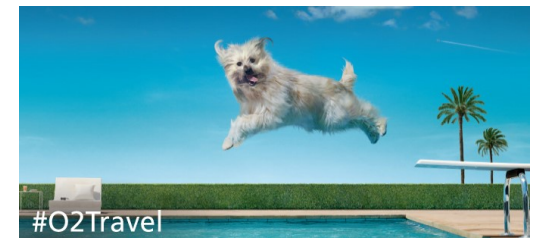
Students agree that exam problems are their most common cause of anxiety. So if you are feeling stressed out about exams, **relax**, most of your friends around you are feeling the same. Everyone goes on about success, and it can seem that your whole future is going to be determined in a couple of hours, regardless of all the hard work you have put in over the years.



Get it off your chest!

No one can sit the exams for you. Talk to family, friends, or teachers. It helps to get your worries off your chest and you will find someone who can relate to what you are feeling. No matter how much the idea of failing an exam is getting on top of you, do not worry on your own, things will just start to seem far worse than they really are. If you feel overwhelmed then visit the following websites and search exam stress.

Youngminds.org.uk/ childline.org.uk/ getselfhelp.co.uk/ hampshirecamhs.nhs.uk



Ease the Stress

- ◆ **Give yourself a break.** You can only remember information for so long before it becomes confusing. You are much more likely to remember information if you take plenty of breaks, even if it is just making a cup of tea.
- ◆ **Keep yourself busy.** When you are not studying, do things you enjoy. Treat yourself. Plan a big night out when the exams have finished.
- ◆ **Eat healthily.** Try not to eat too much junk food, drink lots of water and have lots of healthy snacks.
- ◆ **Take steps to overcome problems.** If you do not understand some of your course work, do not get stressed. Deal with the problem head on by seeing your teacher or get help from your friends.
- ◆ **Relax .** Stress can mess with people's sleeping patterns, therefore take time to relax before going to bed, that way, when you do go to bed you will be able to fall asleep easier rather than lie there worrying about all the things you have not done.

- ◆ **Keep things in perspective:** The exams might seem like the most important thing right now, but not doing as well as you expected does not mean the end of the world.
- ◆ **Do not try to be perfect.** It is great to succeed but keep things in balance. Aim to do your best but recognize that none of us can be perfect all of the time.
- ◆ **Believe in yourself. *Be positive, you can do it!***



Tips for the Exam

- ◆ **Avoid panic** by closing your eyes and taking several long, slow deep breaths (It is natural to feel some exam nerves prior to starting the exam, but getting excessively nervous is counterproductive as you will not be able to think as clearly). Breathing in this way calms your whole nervous system.
- ◆ **Mental pep-talk** by mentally repeating "***I am calm and relaxed***" or "***I know I will do fine***" will help calm those nerves.
- ◆ **If your mind goes blank, don't panic!** Panicking will just make it harder to recall information. Instead, focus on slow, deep breathing techniques for about one minute. If you still cannot remember the information then move on to another question and return to the previous question later.
- ◆ **Keeping hydrated.** Take some water into the test with you, drinking water will help you concentrate.
- ◆ **Coping with nerves.** If you feel nervous before a test, try eating a banana – it sounds strange, but bananas can help to calm you down and they release energy slowly.