



MANAGING EXAM STRESS

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MANAGING EXAM STRESS

Often students get stressed in exams. There are two ways this happens. Before the exam and during the exam. Sometimes we know what helps us to keep calm but we forget about it when we get stressed.



Here we are going to take a few minutes to think about what does and doesn't help you to manage anxiety before and in the exams. We're going to ask you to write it down so that you don't forget it!

BEFORE THE EXAM

What doesn't help?

Take a few minutes to think about what things stress you out the most before an exam.

What situations don't help you?

What actions have you taken that actually make things worse for you?

BEFORE THE EXAM

What has helped?

Think about what has helped you to feel calm before you go into an exam?

What situations made things better for you?

What helps you to keep calm and gives you confidence?

What can you do each and every exam to help yourself stay steady and concentrate?

OUR THREE TOP TIPS

Top Tip 1:

Do not keep revising or looking at notes just before an exam! Revising at the last minute just stresses you out more. This is not the moment to study as you are already adrenalised and information isn't going to be taken in. It's like a marathon runner running just before a marathon. This is the moment to let your mind relax.

Top Tip 2:

Remember your unconscious is like a super computer: Just because you feel like you can't remember anything doesn't mean that you can't. The facts are stored in your unconscious and the exam questions help you to access them in the exam. Not before.

Top tip 3:

Your breathing: Use the breathing technique - a longer out-breath than in-breath. Focus on bringing your awareness down to your feet. Feel the floor beneath your feet and breathe.



DURING THE EXAM

What doesn't help?

All the different tests and exams will have given you experience of things that did not work. Remember what hasn't worked so that you won't do it again.

What situations come up that don't help you?

What actions have you taken that actually made things worse for you in the exam?

DURING THE EXAM

What has helped

Think about what has really helped you to stay calm and focused in the exam.

Was it preparation, exam technique, attitude?

What small things made all the difference? Remembering these means that you can consciously do them again.

OUR THREE TOP TIPS

Top Tip 1:

Second guessing: This happens when we feel anxious and don't trust ourselves. The general rule of thumb is first guess = best guess. Trust yourself and check later at the end of the exam.

Top Tip 2:

Sit-up, stretch and shake out your arms: Adjusting your posture at times during the exam helps you to re-calibrate your body. This calms your body and calms your mind giving you extra focus and concentration.

Top tip 3:

Difficult questions are part of the process: This doesn't mean that you've done something wrong. Everyone faces this. You will get asked things you haven't revised or wanted to revise. You'll get difficult questions. This is all part of the exam experience and it happens to everyone. Prepare for this before the exams, normalise it when it happens and give it your best go.



GOING 'BLANK' IN AN EXAM

This means that you have had a sudden flood of adrenalin. It's probably because you've seen something that has caused you anxiety or panic.

Going blank doesn't mean that you don't know the information, it just means you're having trouble accessing it. Your brain has gone 'off-line' for a minute. Bring yourself 'on-line' by physically helping your body to relax. Gradually work your way into the question by doodling or making little notes. Or leave the question with your unconscious working on it quietly in the background while you continue with the exam and come back to it.



Stretch and breathe

Feel your feet

Take five minutes (yes there is time)

Start making notes and work back into the question

