

NO LIMITS

Helping Young People
Help Themselves

EXAM STRESS

Information and tips to help reduce your
stress and get through exam season



What is stress?



Stress is a natural response to feeling under pressure or feeling overwhelmed. Everyone feels stressed from time to time and that's okay. We will all come across stressful situations in our lives and they can't be avoided, but it's how we deal with those events and the feelings we get that have the lasting impact.

It's easy to bottle up stress, whether that's because you don't recognise it, or don't feel you have anyone to talk to about it, but keeping it all inside you can build it up and make it worse.

Exam Stress

Exam season can be the most stressful part of school, college or university and many people will find it very overwhelming and demanding, so if you're feeling like this, you are not alone. We hope the tips in this book will help.

Lots of people going into exams will feel underprepared and like they've forgotten everything, no matter how much revision they've done, but the best thing to do is to try and remain calm and breathe.

It is important to remember that exams and their results do not define you as a person and do not define your future. If you think you haven't done as well as you had hoped or needed, there will still be options out there for you.

If you're feeling stressed or anxious, take a look at our other resources, which have information and tips that might help you further:



Managing Stress

[nolimitshelp.org.uk/resource/
managing-stress](https://nolimitshelp.org.uk/resource/managing-stress)



Anxiety and Panic Attacks

[nolimitshelp.org.uk/resource/
anxiety-and-panic-attacks](https://nolimitshelp.org.uk/resource/anxiety-and-panic-attacks)

Some simple revision tips

Reward yourself

Make sure to reward yourself when you do reach millstones in your revision. This could be making yourself a cup of tea after you've done some, or watching TV or playing video games to relax when you're finished. Some people like to put a sweet on a random page in their books, so when they get there they get a little surprise.



Make advice and tips visible

Try making posters or little things to stick up on your walls that will help you to remember any tips or advice for revising and self-care that you might find useful.

Stick some music on

Having music on in the background while you revise might help you to get in the zone, maintain focus for longer and fight off any boredom you may feel.



Break subjects down

Use revision cards or post-it notes to break your subjects down into little bitesize bits of information that are easier to take in. It might also help to make your revision seem more manageable.

Have a look at some past questions

Answering past exam questions or papers can help you to prepare for the sort of questions you may get in your exam. Once you've had a go, have a look at some good answers to the question - this may be helpful for learning how to answer those sort of questions and working out where any knowledge gaps are.



What can I do if I'm feeling stressed?

Create a revision schedule

Allocating yourself time to revise for all your different exams or subjects is a good starting point for helping you feel more in control of things.



Try breaking your revision down into small, manageable chunks so your schedule doesn't seem too heavy. Make sure to schedule in breaks and time off, too.



Tell people what will help

Let your family or people you live with know how they can support you with your revision, whether that's giving you more space to process, keeping music and tv sound lower so you can concentrate, or even telling them how you're feeling about your exams. They might be able to help you to relieve your stress.

Ask someone if you don't understand

If there's something you're not quite sure of or don't understand, the best way to find out will be by asking someone! Try asking a classmate or even your teacher. Lots of people think that teachers will be angry if you tell them you don't know something, but more likely than not, they will be glad you told them and will be happy to help - they want you to do well!



Learn your timetable

One thing that might make people feel like they're not in control is not knowing when their exams are. Keeping on top of your timetable can help you feel more organised and on top of things.



Print your timetable off or write it down and keep it somewhere that's visible so you can easily find it.

Have a good sleeping pattern

When you're revising and taking in lots of information, and when you're feeling stressed, getting enough sleep to give you energy for the next day is important.



The recommended amount of sleep for teenagers is 8-10 hours. See if you can go down the middle and aim to get nine hours.

Going to bed at the same time each night and having a good bedtime routine, like no phones before bed, doing something relaxing, will help your sleep and energy levels.

If you're struggling to get to sleep, try putting a podcast on to give your mind something to concentrate on.



Look after your physical health

Making sure you look after your body will help you to feel healthier, happier and have more energy.

Try and exercise and get some fresh air to help you let off any steam you've built up. Your body also releases endorphins, serotonin and dopamine when you exercise, which all make you feel better.

Eating the right food will help as well, by giving our body the right nutrients to be able to function properly, which is important when going through a busy and stressful period.

Prioritise yourself and your wellbeing

Make time to look after yourself and practice good self-care. Activities that will relax or distract you and help you let off some steam will help.



Having a bath or shower, or getting some fresh air by going for a quick walk or run are good for giving you a mental reset. Mindfulness activities like colouring in or meditation may help you to feel more relaxed.

What to do the night before and the morning of your exam

Check your exam time and location

Make sure you know where to go and when you have to be there - you don't want to end up being late or going to the wrong place!



Pack your bag the night before

Doing this before you go to sleep means you don't have to worry about it in the morning, and you have time to double-check you've got everything you need,

Set an alarm

Set your alarm early enough so you have time to wake up properly, take things slow and leave for your exam in good time. If you're not good at getting up, set more than one!



Get a good amount of sleep

As mentioned on the previous page, getting enough sleep is vital. Try to get nine hours of sleep the night before your exam, going to sleep early enough that you have time in the morning.

Have breakfast

Breakfast is really important, especially if you have a morning exam. We need food to give us energy and exams take up a lot of mental energy. Make sure you drink enough, too - water is fuel for the brain!



Don't forget to breathe

Practising some breathing techniques can help if we are stressed or anxious.

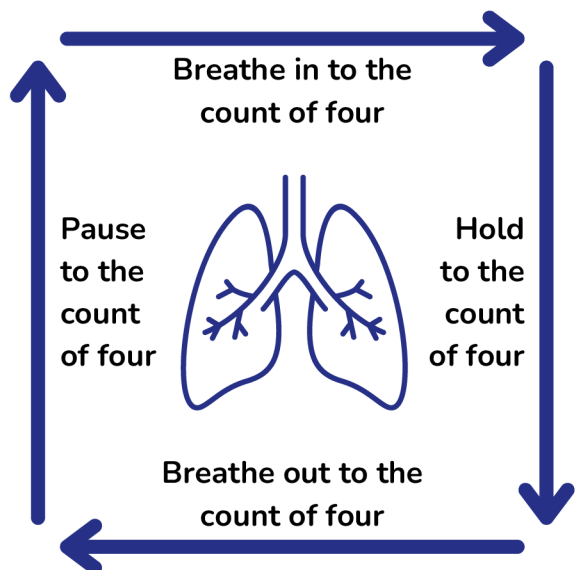
Five finger breathing

Slowly trace round each of the fingers on one hand with a finger from the other. Breathe in on the way up the finger and breathe out on the way down.



Square breathing

Start by breathing in and follow round until you start to feel relaxed.



Want to find out more?



The Student Room

[thestudentroom.co.uk/revision/
your-guide-to-handling-revision-
and-exam-stress](https://thestudentroom.co.uk/revision/your-guide-to-handling-revision-and-exam-stress)



Mind

[mind.org.uk/information-
support/your-stories/14-ways-to-
beat-exam-stress](https://mind.org.uk/information-support/your-stories/14-ways-to-beat-exam-stress)



Childline

[childline.org.uk/info-
advice/school-college-and-
work/school-college/preparing-
exams](https://childline.org.uk/info-advice/school-college-and-work/school-college/preparing-exams)



YoungMinds

[youngminds.org.uk/young-
person/blog/exam-results-stress-
advice-for-young-people](https://youngminds.org.uk/young-person/blog/exam-results-stress-advice-for-young-people)

Want to talk to No Limits?

Advice Centre

Open six days a week, come down and talk to a trained youth worker about any issue you have, without needing to make an appointment.



[nolimitshelp.org.uk/advice-and-
wellbeing-hub/advice-centre](https://nolimitshelp.org.uk/advice-and-wellbeing-hub/advice-centre)

School & College Drop-Ins

Our youth workers are in Southampton schools and colleges weekly or fortnightly.



[nolimitshelp.org.uk/advice-and-
wellbeing-hub/school-and-
college-drop-ins](https://nolimitshelp.org.uk/advice-and-wellbeing-hub/school-and-college-drop-ins)