

## Managing exam stress

Revising, taking exams and getting your results is a stressful time for many students. Here are some tips about looking after yourself and helping you manage the anxiety you may be feeling:

- **Get the balance right.** You will feel less stressed if you prepare for your exams by revising but don't overdo it. Give yourself time off.
- **Exercise.** Break up your day of revision with exercise. Even a short walk will clear your head.
- **Food and drink.** Don't go into a morning exam without breakfast. Try to follow a healthy diet with some fruit and vegetables, and drink plenty of water.
- **Get enough sleep.** Keep a regular sleep-pattern and avoid all night revision sessions.
- **Limit screen time.** Try to restrict checking devices all the time. Constantly checking Snapchat or Instagram can be stressful if the only topic is exams. And avoid screens before bedtime.
- **Calming nerves.** Mindfulness, meditation or yoga may help you to calm your nerves. You can download apps for all of them, to see what works best for you.
- **Be organised.** Get everything ready the night before your exam. Set an alarm so you give yourself plenty of time to get to your exam hall on time!
- **Don't rush.** When you open the exam paper, take a few deep breaths to calm yourself, so you read the instructions and questions carefully.
- **Don't give up.** If you come out of an exam thinking it's gone badly, try not to dwell on it (and don't go into any chat rooms). Focus on the next one.

# Reaching a tipping point?

While some levels of stress at exam time are normal and manageable, that's not the same as feeling overwhelmed by anxiety. Here are some of the symptoms you may experience if you are finding it difficult to cope:

- You feel frightened, nervous or panicky all the time
- You can't sleep
- You have no appetite or are overeating
- You can't concentrate on anything
- You're suffering from palpitations - your heart feels like its racing.

If you are experiencing symptoms like these, seek help to get you through this difficult time. Talk to your family, a teacher who knows you well, a counsellor at your school or to your GP.

If you don't want to talk to somebody face-to-face, here are some organisations which can help you in a crisis:

- Childline <https://www.childline.org.uk/>
- Papyrus UK <https://www.papyrus-uk.org/>
- The Samaritans <https://www.samaritans.org/>
- Young Minds <https://www.youngminds.org.uk/young-person/youngminds-textline>
- Kooth <https://www.kooth.com/>