



Gloucestershire Health and Care
NHS Foundation Trust



Exam Stress

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What is exam stress and anxiety?

- Anxiety affects 1 in 3 people in their lifetime and it can have a significant impact on their life.
- Anxiety can begin to interfere with going out and socialising, sleeping, having fun and eating.



What does anxiety look and feel like?




Headache	Tense jaw	Behaviours	Jelly legs
Dizziness	Heart racing	Extra energy	Tingling
Stomach pain	Restless	Need to use toilet	Racing thoughts
Butterflies	Feeling sick	Dry mouth	Tight throat
Sweating	Trouble sleeping	Foggy brain	Shaking

So, why do we get stressed or anxious?

- Fear of failure
- Perfectionism
- Pressure from others
- Negative past experiences
- Not feeling prepared
- Unhelpful thinking



General exam stress-busting tips

- Prioritise your time when revising
- Make a revision timetable
- Exercise and eat healthily 
- Take breaks from social media before exams
- Put your worries into perspective
- Do mock exams at home
- Improve your exam time management



Revision tips

- Leave plenty of time to revise so that you don't have to do last-minute cramming.
- Develop a timetable so that you can track and monitor your progress.
- Allow time for fun and relaxation.
- Take a short break as soon as you notice your mind is losing concentration, but don't get distracted.
- Experiment with alternative revision techniques.
- Don't drink too much coffee, tea or fizzy drinks; the caffeine will make your thinking less clear.
- Regular moderate exercise will boost your energy, clear your mind, reduce feelings of stress and help you sleep better.

7 revision techniques for GCSE & A-Level

- Flashcards, Flashcards and More Flashcards!
- YouTube Tutorials Are Heavily Underrated
- The Pomodoro Technique
- Mind Maps Past Papers
- Teach Someone Else
- Group Revision

Tips for the exam itself

It's natural to feel some exam nerves but don't panic.

The quickest and most effective way to eliminate feelings of stress and panic is to close your eyes and take several long, slow deep breaths.

- Give yourself a mental pep-talk by repeating "I am calm" or "I know I will do fine"
- Survey what's in front of you
- Prioritise what needs to be done
- Pace yourself

Managing mental blocks in the exam

- Deep-breathing exercises
- Memory recovery
- Imagine you know the answer and see what comes to mind
- Try not to keep staring at the question – brain research suggests the position of the eyes is important: look up as you try and remember it
- Create a mind map of what you do remember – the power of association can trigger your memory Begin with questions you can answer – add anything you remember to your mind map while you are doing this



After the exam

Don't spend endless time criticising yourself for where you think you went wrong. Congratulate yourself for the things you did right, learn from the bits where you know you could have done better, and then move on.

Plan to reward yourself for your hard work. After the exam, do something you enjoy. If you are going to meet up with someone, you could agree with them that you will only talk about the exam for 5 minutes - or even not at all.

It's important that you let the stress of the exam go, especially if you have more exams to sit.



Where to get help

- **Cotswold Counselling Service** www.cotswold-counselling.org.uk
01285 885830
- **YoungMinds** www.youngminds.org.uk
- **Teens in Crisis** www.ticplus.org.uk Tel: 01594 372777
- **Anxiety UK** www.anxietyuk.org.uk
- **Childline** www.childline.org.uk 0800 1111 (free; 24 hr)
- **YoungMinds Parent Helpline** 0808 802 5544
- **On Your Mind** www.onyourmindglos.nhs.uk
- **ChatHealth** confidential advice from a school nurse
Text: 07507 333351 (Mon-Fri 9-4.30)
- **Samaritans** 116 123 (free; 24 hr)
- **Gloucestershire Self Harm Helpline**
www.gloucestershireselfharm.org



with you, for you



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