

Beating exam stress

Exams are pretty much always stressful. You can manage stress by planning well, and having realistic expectations. If there's stuff you're not strong on, there will be others in the class, and the teacher who can help you. You can also manage stress by staying healthy.

Exams are a hassle

We're saying it because it's true. No one likes doing them, and cramming information into your brain over a short period of time is stressful. A bit of stress can get you going, but too much can make you exhausted, angry and annoyed.

Managing stress

You'll be less stressed if you've got an idea of how the lead-up to your exams is going to look, so plan what you're going to study and when, and stick it up on the wall, or on your desktop. Break it down into manageable chunks and start working through it at the rate you planned. It's probably more boring at the start, but it's far less stressful. Plan some break times and days off too!

Take the pressure off

Aside from preparing, you can also deal with pressure and expectation by realistically assessing how you think you'll go, and working to do the best you can. If other people's expectations are pressuring you, talk to them and try to get them to back off. If you're putting too much pressure on yourself, try to realise failure isn't fatal. It's likely that the worst that can happen is that you take it again, with a massive head-start from the work you've already done.

Do it together

There are other people studying for the same exam, and they probably don't like having to lock themselves away to study any more than you do. Get together with them and take the books outside from time to time. If you're not as strong in certain areas, it could help to talk to other students as well. If you are good at it, share the brain-wealth.

If you need help, get it

It's your teacher, lecturer or tutors job to help you understand the subject, so if you're not understanding stuff, tell them and they'll help. If your study load or exams are driving you mad, there are counsellors who are there to help with that as well.

This will be useful if...

- > *You have to do exams*
- > *Exams stress you out*
- > *You have trouble planning or concentrating on study*
- > *You need help with some stuff you're studying*
- > *You need help planning your time*

Take action...

- > *Grab a notebook and start planning study, and activity breaks*
- > *Take regular breaks, it actually helps you study better*
- > *Work on building better coping skills*

Have options

Don't put all of your hopes into getting into one course. Have a few options, and realise that if your heart's set on one thing there are always going to be other paths to it.

Go easy on the substances

All of them – caffeine, cigarettes, coffee, no–doz, alcohol, marijuana, Ritalin, Dexamphetamine and any other drugs. Any drug you think will help you study is actually a short–term fix that'll probably make you feel much worse and cause you to underperform later. What will actually help is sleep, good food and exercise.