



scotty's



How to cope with exams

Studying for exams can be a pretty stressful time, here are some top tips on how to prepare for big exams like GCSEs and A' Levels and look after yourself along the way

Three top tips for revising

Space out your learning

- Instead of cramming your learning all at once, it is much more effective to spread it over a longer period of time learning a little information regularly, rather than trying to learn a lot in a single day. This gives you time to forget the information and then re-learn it in your next study session. Using this process makes it more likely that the information is cemented into your long-term memory ready to be brought back up in your exam.
- Trying writing a revision plan for the weeks leading up to the exams giving priority to the exams that come first or those you find most difficult. Make sure you add time for breaks and activities you enjoy, constant studying can increase stress levels and could result in feeling overwhelmed.

Use retrieval practice

- Using techniques of recalling previously-learnt knowledge, you can create stronger memories, making it more likely that you will remember the information in the long term.
- Here are some easy ways to use retrieval practice in study sessions:
 - Using past papers
 - Doing multiple-choice tests
 - Making flashcards
 - Working with a friend writing your own questions and answering them

Get a good study partner

- Try studying with a friend or classmate to help you feel motivated and help you when you feel stuck with learning and remembering.
- Research has shown that if the person next to you is working hard, it is likely that you will follow and increase your working to match theirs

How much revision is enough?

Many experts say 15-20 hours per week (2-3 hours per day) during term time is best, whereas some schools recommend 7 hours of revision per day during the Easter holidays. Experiment to see what works for you, everyone has different concentration levels and ability to retain information.

The best thing is to create a plan of what feels reasonable and balanced to you, prioritise exams that come first, schedule in breaks, mealtimes and time to do the things you enjoy.

Then stick to the plan!

How to look after yourself during exam season

Keep up normal self-care routines

- Keep your hygiene routines like showering and putting your make up on as normal and you'll feel better all round.
- Kick-starting your day with a short meditation session or mindfulness exercise can put you on the right road to productivity and memory recollection

Take regular breaks

- Taking time to do the things you enjoy gives your brain a rest so it is ready to store information when you return to revising
- Try to fit in some physical activity a couple of times a week to give your brain a break

Look after your body

- Make sure you get a good night sleep of 7-9 hours every night, have a regular bedtime and time to unwind at the end of the day.
- Eat three meals a day to fuel your body and give your brain the energy to learn.

Know your worth

- Remember that your worth is not measured by the amount of work you do or some marks on a piece of paper.
- Be kind to yourself and proud of yourself, you're doing the best you can.

What to do on the day

The night before...

Pack your bag for the next day. This is far less stressful than having to do it the morning of the exam. Do a full equipment check and double check you have everything you will need. Don't be tempted to stay up all night cramming at the expense of getting a good night's sleep. How well you sleep is linked to how much you remember, how well you feel the next day and your ability to cope with stressful situations.

The morning of...

Eating breakfast gives you fuel for your brain and will have a big impact on your attention and memory. You might want to do some mediation or mindfulness to help reduce your stress levels.

An hour before...

Get to school early. Everything is always more stressful if you are running late. Where possible, avoid people who make you stressed and anxious as they won't help you feel better leading up to the exam.

One minute before...

All that is left to do is take a few deep breaths to calm yourself down, gather your thoughts and remind yourself of your exam strategy - **Remember, you're doing the best you can**

After the exam...

Do a quick reflection and debrief on the exam. Don't dwell on it too much as you can't go back and change your answers. Try to do something that will help you unwind and if you have another exam on the same day, move on and refocus on to that.