

ARTICLE 1: TIPS FOR DEALING WITH EXAM STRESS

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EXAM
RESCUE

1. Plan your time

Draw up a schedule of when your exams are and when you will revise for them. Include short breaks and time for relaxation, because we all know it's vital to recharge those batteries. Most importantly, stick to your plan!

2. Avoid sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll

Don't try to deal with stress by turning to alcohol or drugs. They don't help your memory or your ability to concentrate (neither do sex or rock and roll). This is the time for tranquillity of the mind...there's plenty of time for partying after exams are over (last exam night, results night, Christmas, New Year)...

3. Revise methodically

Just reading long sections of text is not going to help you remember things (unless you have that kind of brain, which is very unusual!). Instead, study creatively: write out important dates, facts, or passages, use lots of coloured pens and underline key phrases. Go back over your notes a day later and a week later. Your memory will get better every time. NOTE: This method does not leave time for last-minute cramming...never a good strategy.

4. Practice with old exams

For most of you, there will be old exam papers in the Library that you can use as practice exams. Check out how the questions are usually asked and practice reading the question properly and answering all the required bits. Once you've practiced on a few old papers, it makes the actual exam seem less stressful (because you know what to expect!).

5. Stick notes around your house/flat/trailer

For the major things you need to remember, make bright coloured notes and stick them all over the place so you see them all the time. Eventually their message will sink in (hopefully!). I had a friend doing Law when I was a first year, who pretty much wallpapered her bedroom with key cases, and then read them every night before she went to sleep. Not really sure how that worked out for her (we tragically lost touch after exams) but it was a good idea all the same!

6. Ignore your friends

Not entirely, of course! But ignore those people who reckon they've done SO much revision that they don't even have time to eat, and they've been revising since January last year. Also ignore those people who go on about how easy the whole thing is and how they don't have to study at all so you may as well go for a drink with them. Neither will do you any favours. You know what you need to do, so just get on with that.

7. Ask for help

There are great sources of support available if you feel that you need it. Student Services, the UCSA, Student Health, the Rec Centre, and your lecturers can all offer you help in different ways over the exam period. Make sure you know what's available and use your support network wisely and well!

8. Get some exercise

Exercise is a great way to give yourself a break and to rejuvenate out your concentration span. You don't have to do hours of circuit training — a 15-minute jog or a brisk walk will do the job nicely (or try out some yoga at the Rec. Centre)!