

Are you ready
for exams?

Exam Stress

How to manage stress for success



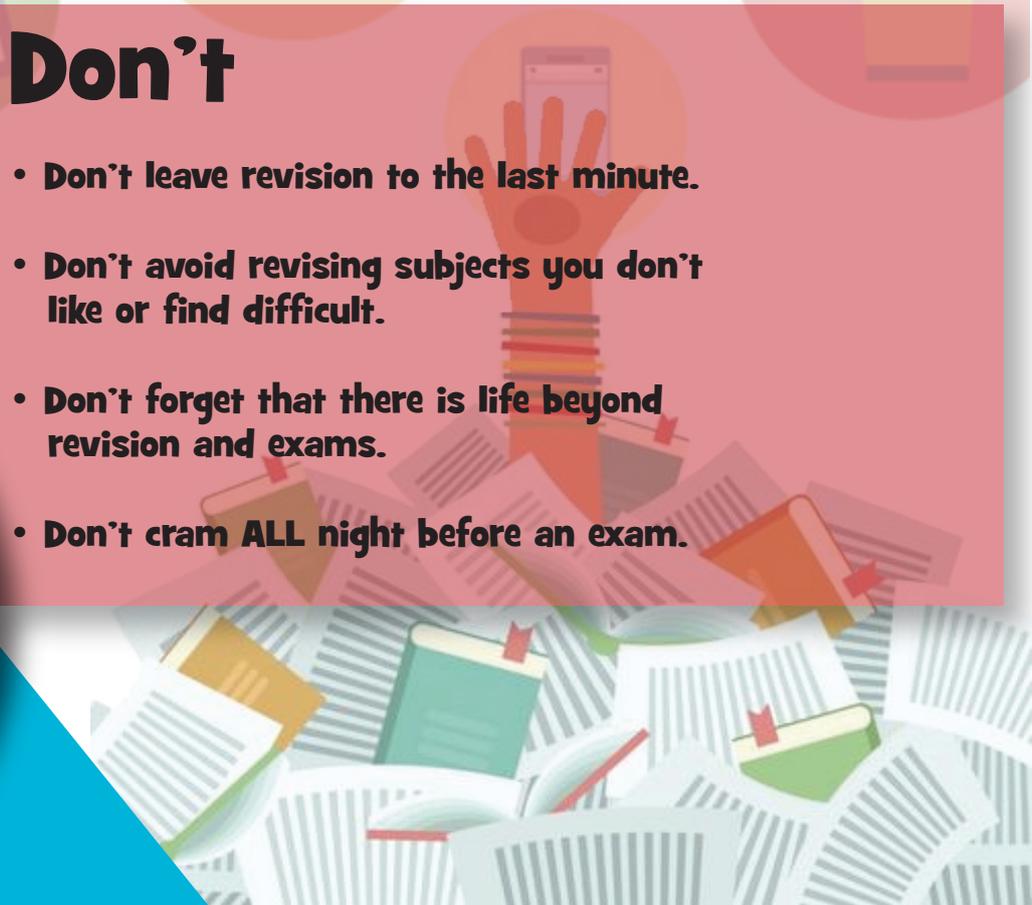
Do's and Don'ts

Do

- **Have your own revision timetable – start planning well before exams begin. Your teacher should be able to help.**
- **Make your books, notes and essays user-friendly. Use headings, highlighting and revision cards, and get tips on other revision techniques from teachers and friends with experience of exams. You could also consider buying revision guides.**
- **Take notes of the important points when revising. Try to answer the questions of past exam papers – explain answers to tricky questions to someone else.**
- **Everyone revises differently. Find out what routine suits you best - alone or with a friend or parent/carer; early morning or late at night; short, sharp bursts or longer sessions; with music or without noise.**
- **Ask for help from your teacher/learning mentor, parent/carer or a friend if there are things you don't understand.**

Don't

- **Don't leave revision to the last minute.**
- **Don't avoid revising subjects you don't like or find difficult.**
- **Don't forget that there is life beyond revision and exams.**
- **Don't cram ALL night before an exam.**



Remember it's important to eat and sleep well. Put yourself first - this is an important time for you. Try to talk to your family about how they can make studying a little easier for you - for example, by agreeing times when you can have your own space, when they will try to be a little quieter around the house and when you'd rather not be disturbed (except perhaps for the occasional treat, such as a drink or snack).



Don't revise all the time. Make sure you give yourself time each day to relax, taking breaks to do something you enjoy - watch TV, listen to music, read a book or go out for a walk.



Preparing yourself

Check

- Have a good breakfast if you can.
 - Make sure you know where the exam is being held and what time it starts. Give yourself plenty of time to get there.
 - Take all the equipment you need for each exam, including extra pens and pencils.
 - Take in a bottle of water and tissues.
 - Go to the loo beforehand!
- If you feel really anxious, breathe slowly and deeply while waiting for the exam to start.

Pace yourself

- Read the instructions before starting the exam.
 - Ask the teacher or exam supervisor if anything is unclear.
 - Read through all the questions before starting writing, and make sure you are clear how many questions you are required to answer.
 - If there is a choice, start by answering the question you feel you can answer best.
 - If you are stuck on a question, go on to the next. You can always come back to it later. If you are really stuck, try to have an intelligent guess anyway.
 - Leave time to read through and check your answers before the exam finishes.
- Plan how much time you'll need for each question

All about you!



Advice for parents

If you're worried about your child's exams and the marks they might get, imagine how overwhelming it might be for them. Preparing for and sitting exams can be a very pressured time, and then, once the exams are finished, it's a countdown to the results which can be equally stressful for everyone.

As a parent you can really help your children through this time, just by being there for them and encouraging them to talk about their feelings and fears. You can also ask for help from the school itself. Here are just a few ideas to make exam time that bit more bearable.

- Make sure they have a comfortable place to work.
- If you do not have a suitable spot, make it easy for them to study elsewhere, like the library.
- Accept that some people can revise better with music or the TV on in the background.
- Establish a revision routine by re-arranging the family's schedules and priorities.
- Talk to the school about what they advise.
- Be lenient about chores and untidiness as much as you are able to.
- Give them a break and understand lost tempers and moodiness.
- Try to avoid nagging them as it can help them lose focus.
- It is never too late to study, revise or ask for help.
- Don't go in for bribes; encourage them to work for their own satisfaction.
- Schedule small and frequent rewards for the effort they are putting in.
- Suggest a special evening or day out as it could give them a treat to look forward to.
- Be calm, positive and reassuring and put the whole thing into perspective. They can always take an exam again.

After the exam

After each exam, allow them the opportunity to talk about how they have done and allow them to do the talking while you listen. Encourage them not to dwell on mistakes they may have felt they have made. They may want some space to compare notes with other friends. You may want to share your experiences of exams as this may reassure them.

Plan an event to mark the results, whatever they are and have some fun now with your child. Make it clear that you love and value your child for who they are, and not for what happened in an exam. You may want to take a look at our top tips for exam results for more advice.