



Leaflet provided by The Mental Health Support Team (MHST) in Schools and Colleges, a free NHS service.

Staying well during your exams: Top Tips

Information leaflet for young people

**Practical strategies to help
you during your exams**

Mental Health Support Team

Top Tip 1

Notice signs of stress during exam time. What are your warning signs?

dizziness

headaches

trouble sleeping

acne or spots

clenched jaw or grinding teeth

tense muscles

heart beats faster

overeating or loss of appetite

moodiness or irritability

back pain

fingers feel numb and tingly

nail biting

skin rash

sweaty hands

breathing harder and faster

nervous or upset stomach or nausea

body feels weak

achy legs



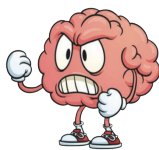
Top Tip 2

Remember the reason for your signs of stress.

Fight

flight

FREEZE



Remember that you are safe!

Find out more!



SCAN ME

Top Tip 3

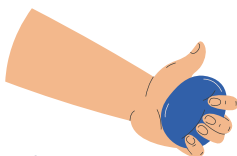
Practise and choose a breathing, grounding or calming technique that works for you.

Finger Breathing



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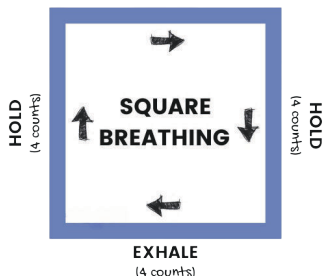
RIGHT NOW



- 5 Things I Can See
- 4 Things I Can Feel
- 3 Things I Can Hear
- 2 Things I Can Smell
- 1 Deep Breath

Square Breathing

INHALE
(4 counts)



EXHALE
(4 counts)

Can you notice...

- 5 things that are red
- 4 things that are orange
- 3 things that are yellow
- 2 things that are green
- 1 thing that is blue



TIPP



Temperature

Change your body temperature. Splash your face with cold water, hold an ice cube, or take a cold shower.



Intense Exercise

Do intense exercise to match your intense emotion. Sprint to the end of the street, do jumping jacks or push ups.



Paced Breathing

Try 'Square Breathing.' Continue until you feel more calm.



Paired Muscle Relaxation

Focus on one muscle group at a time. Tighten your muscles as much as possible for 5 seconds. Then release and relax. Repeat with other muscle groups.

Top Tip 4



Stop and notice your thoughts - they are not always true or helpful. You can't stop them coming in but you can challenge them by using the 4Cs.



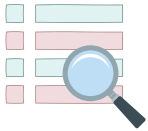
Catch it

Notice that it is an unhelpful thought



Check it

Take a step back! Am I sure things are as bad as I feel they are?



Challenge it

Is there any evidence that this thought might not be 100% true? Might there be another way of looking at it?



Change it

What is a more helpful way of thinking about this?

Don't believe everything that you think!

I give up!	→	I'll try a different way
I can't do this!	→	I don't know how to do this yet
I failed!	→	Mistakes are how I learn and get better
It's too hard!	→	This may take me some time
I don't know how!	→	I can learn how

Top Tip 5

Consider the things which you can control.

Where do these examples belong in the diagram?

My revision plan

How I revise

Believing in myself

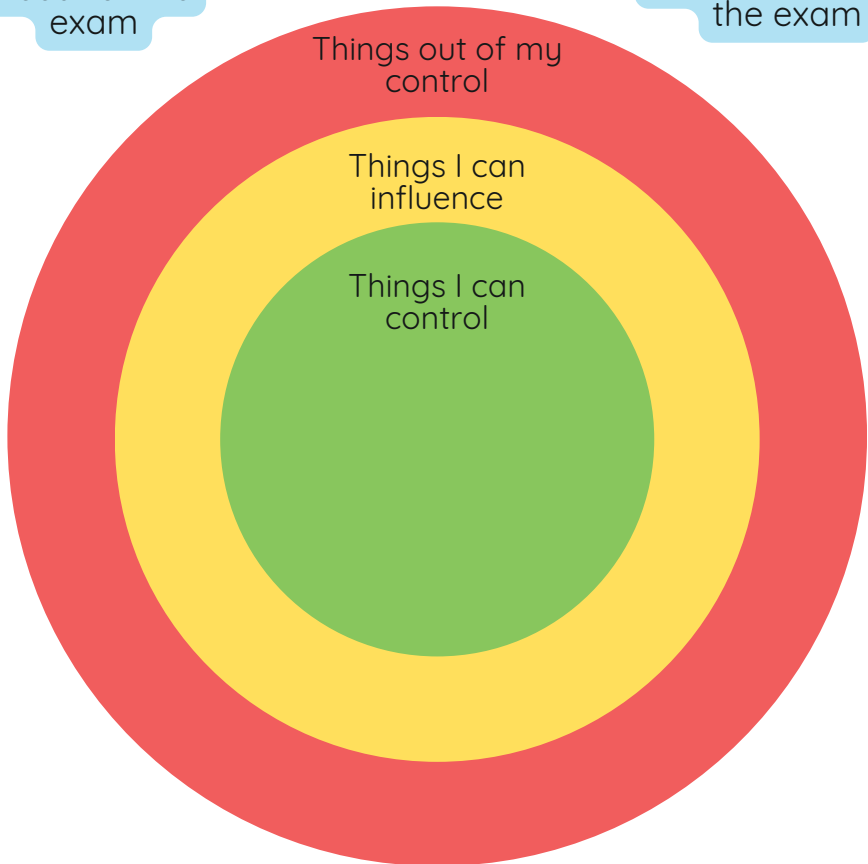
How my friends do in the exam

My nutrition and fluid intake

Structure of the exam

The equipment I need for the exam

The questions which come up in the exam



Top Tip 6

Stay hydrated

Make sure you drink around 2-3 litres of water each day.

Get a good night's sleep



Teenagers need 8-10 hours sleep per night to maintain concentration and productivity.

Take a break

Use regular breaks to re-charge your brain. For every 45 minutes of revision, have a short break and do something completely different.

Talk to someone



If you are having difficulties coping, remember that you are not alone.

Above all, learn how to relax and take time for self care. Rest boosts productivity in the areas of focus and decision-making. A well-rested brain is better equipped to concentrate on tasks, process information, and make rational choices. All of which, ultimately lead to increased productivity.

Maintain a healthy diet

Fuel to keep your brain going!



Exercise

30 minutes of exercise a day releases endorphins and increases productivity. Try a walk, run or swim!

Mindfulness

Simple mindfulness exercises can help you to feel more relaxed and present. Engaging your senses outdoors is especially beneficial.



11:11

< Notes

Done

Self-care is more than just bubble baths and facemasks. It can also be:

- asking for help if you need it
- cleaning & decluttering
- meditation & mindfulness
- volunteering
- helping other people
- taking breaks, resting & sleeping well
- being kind & gentle to yourself
- having a break from social media
- spending time with people who are supportive & caring
- moving your body
- practicing gratitude

Top Tip 7

Sometimes you may need some help. Who is in your 'Back Up Team'? Who would you need for different types of support?



Who would you need for....

Emotional support? _____

Practical support? _____

A chat? _____

A hug? _____

Learning support? _____

Having fun? _____

We know it can seem really difficult to seek help when you are worried, stress or lonely but getting the support you need and deserve can make a big difference.

<p>GOT A CARE PLAN OR DISCHARGE PLAN?</p>  <p>That will tell you who to contact</p>	<p>KOOTH Digital support</p>  <p>Online mental wellbeing community. Safe, anonymous support free to people under 18.</p> <p>kooth www.kooth.com</p>	<p>ARE YOU IN A MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS?</p> 
<p>Deaf? Need urgent help? Contact us using InterpretersLive! (8am to 8pm) or NHS 111 (SignVideo) 24/7</p>		



CRISIS TEXT LINE



Children & Family Health Devon

