

Chill out- Try a relaxation routine...

- ▶ Close your eyes and breathe slowly and deeply. Breathe out more slowly than you breathe in.
- ▶ Locate any areas of tension and try to relax those muscles – imagine the tension disappearing.
- ▶ Relax each part of the body in turn – from your feet to the top of your head.
 - ▶ As you focus on each part of your body, think of warmth, heaviness and relaxation.
- ▶ After 20 minutes, take some deep breaths and stretch.

Laugh...

Research shows that not only does laughter improve our mood; it also relieves stress and improves our immune system.

The next time you find yourself with a frown on your face, consider this: four-year-old children laugh on average 400 times a day, whereas adults only laugh 14 times. So go on, get those funny videos out and invite your friends over for some serious cheering up.

Breathe...

Panic is often triggered by hyperventilating (quick, shallow breaths). So if you feel yourself losing it during the exam, sit back for a moment and control your breathing. Deep breath in and out through the nose, counting to five each way.

Exercise....

Take time for physical activity. Regular and frequent exercise is a good stress reducer; helping to relieve the physical tension and Release those feel-good brain chemicals called endorphins.

Reward yourself.

Try to make time for yourself away from your studies to wind down. E.g. going running and shutting out the world for a while.

Take time for your mind and body to relax. Chatting with friends, meditation, or just watching a bit of telly can take the edge off.

Everyone needs time off, and it's a bad idea to abandon your social life but for a period near the examinations, you may need to cut down.

It is important to keep in mind that some sacrifices may be valuable in achieving what you want to get from the course.

Eat right...

Treat yourself to fresh fruit and vegetables and have a proper breakfast. Fuel your brain as well as your body - no one can think straight on coffee and chocolate alone.

Hydrate...

Stay hydrated-drink lots of water, low-calorie sodas or herbal teas is key to feeling alert.

Juices or sugary drinks can make you feel jittery and mess up your energy levels. Caffeinated tea and coffee perk you up, but they can all leave you craving more and, in excess, will either slow or bring you down, or over-stimulate you. If you feel jittery or have problems sleeping, drink your last one in the late afternoon. Bear in mind that colas, energy and sports drinks may all contain a lot of sugar and caffeine.

Plan...

Make a realistic revision schedule. Work out how much you have to do & the time you have to do it in, then break it down into manageable chunks. Aim to do a few hours of revision each day, and mix up your subjects so you don't get bored.

Relax...

Taking regular short breaks while you're working may help to reduce stress. A break every 45 to 60 minutes is about right. Taking your mind off your work will help you come back to it feeling refreshed.

Learn to recognise when you're stressing out...

A break or a chat with someone who knows the pressure you're under will help to get things into perspective.

Sleep well....

Wind down before bed and don't revise under the duvet - your bed is a sanctuary, not a desk. Try to get your eight hours.

Talk...

If you're feeling stressed, it's important to talk to someone you trust, such as a family member, teacher or a friend. Many people find exams difficult to deal with, so don't be embarrassed to ask for support.