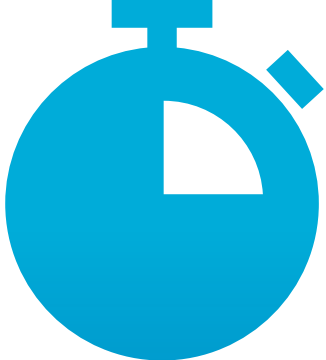


PiXL 
Prepare
to Perform

**STUDENT
BOOKLET**



PiXL
Wellbeing

STAYING CALM, FEELING GOOD, BEING EFFECTIVE

This booklet is designed to help you develop strategies to cope with the exam period so you are fully prepared to perform at your best.

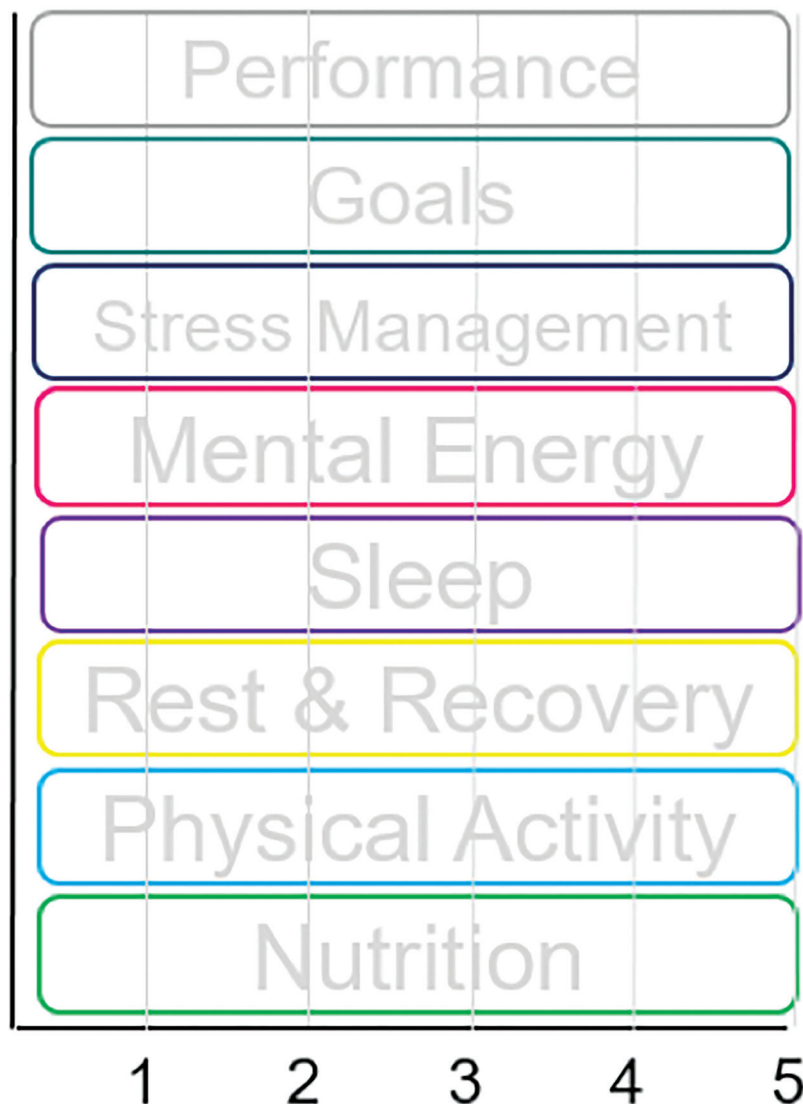
Managing a busy life when you are studying can be challenging but there are many areas which you can control to help you perform better when it comes to exam time. This booklet will explain each area and allow you to focus, set yourself a plan and work towards being prepared in the best possible way.

Making time for each area can have an impact on your energy levels and both your physical and mental wellbeing.

HOW PERFORMANCE READY ARE YOU?

Complete the chart below by colouring in the areas in each section to see where you currently are for each area. 1 is the lowest and means you really need to improve in this area. 5 means you are really happy and feel like you are doing everything you can to perform at your best.

Power to Perform



HOW READY ARE YOU TO PERFORM?

All hard work is represented in a performance, whether it's an athlete competing at the biggest event of their career, or a student taking an exam. There are so many things that influence a performance and in order to be the best we can be, many of these things have to be worked on.

What performance are you looking to achieve?

How ready are you to perform?

Rate yourself out of 10

What do you need to do to be more ready?

How can you be Prepared to Perform?

WE CAN ALL GROW

GROWTH MINDSET

Be the best you can be – Preparing to Perform for when you need to Perform.

Can you have a “can do” mindset - “I love a challenge”.

We all have the ability to be a bit better than we are now, so what do you need to prepare to perform?

- Know what you want – goals.
- Want/desire to achieve it – motivation.
- Work hard at the right things – focus.
- Always believe you can achieve it – belief.

Performance also includes the ability to recognise and take the opportunities that come your way. Do you see them and embrace them as an opportunity, or do you see challenge?

Who or what can support you?

Friends

Family

Teachers

Revision Guide

Resources

Apps

What other opportunities could you access?

How can you go about accessing these opportunities?

OUTCOME GOALS

GOALS INSPIRE YOU TO PUSH FORWARD WITH PURPOSE; TO GET OUT OF BED AND INTO SCHOOL; TO TURN OFF THE TV AND WRITE THAT ASSIGNMENT; TO GET UP OFF THE SOFA AND EXERCISE. YOU CAN THINK OF A GOAL AS THE ENGINE WHICH DRIVES YOU TOWARDS YOUR DESIRED OUTCOME.

PLANNING FOR SUCCESS WITH GOALS

Getting organised with planning and setting yourself some goals is the first step you will need to achieve exam success. Setting yourself goals and objectives will help you organise your time and focus on your study.

It is important to consider what you want to achieve during the exam period by setting yourself some goals. When setting study goals and tasks, the most important thing to do is be honest and realistic with yourself and your ability to study.

When setting yourself some goals make sure you include free time for relaxation, your social life and physical activity. It is also key to keep your goals flexible so you don't get disappointed if you don't achieve your goal or it takes a little longer than planned.

MOTIVATION

Motivation is a key part of being able to Prepare to Perform. Knowing what you want to achieve, and why you want to do something, can help keep you motivated to do the hard work required to get the reward.

- What do you want to achieve?
- Why do you want to achieve it?
- What will achieving it give you?
- How would achieving it make you feel?

Use these answers to create your Outcome Goal. Outcome Goals are often influenced by things outside your control, such as competitors in sport or the way others perform in an exam. Despite this, Outcome Goals are still so important in enabling you to DREAM about what is possible. For example, long before winning an Olympic medal, an athlete dreams about achieving this. Knowing what you are aiming for is a helpful motivation to put the hard work in, making you more likely to achieve what you want.

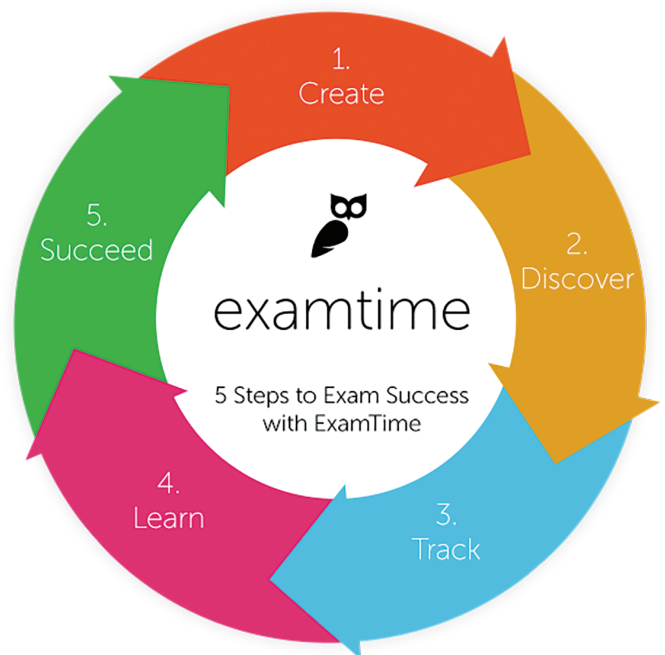
OUTCOME GOALS

- What do you dream about achieving?
- What would be your 'gold medal' performance?

OUTCOME GOAL

BENEFITS OF STUDY GOALS:

- You can see the bigger picture of what you want to achieve
- Goals produce action
- Goals motivate you
- You become more productive
- You know what you should be doing and when
- You won't panic as much
- Reduce your stress levels
- Better sleep
- Feel more relaxed
- Peace of mind for how you approach the exam period



“What keeps me going is goals.”

– Muhammad Ali

PERFORMANCE GOALS

In order to achieve our Outcome Goals we need to know what we need to do to be successful. Performance goals are measurable and sometimes SMART goals.

HOW TO SET YOURSELF SOME GOALS:

1. Be realistic and specific - specify when and what you will do. This will increase your chances of getting it done.
2. Break each goal into simple, digestible parts. The easier you make it to complete each step of the goal, the more likely it is that you will eventually achieve it.
3. Each goal must have a target time frame. Make a note of them on your daily or weekly planner and on your overall revision plan.
4. Write down your goals on a piece of paper and keep them close by. It's important that you make a record of them; it will keep you focused and remind you of what still has to be done. Read the list every day to keep you aware of them and reinforce them in your mind.
5. Don't bite off more than you can chew. Start off with a relatively small number of goals and gradually increase their number and size as you become more effective at completing them.

If you are to achieve your outcome goal what do you need to deliver in your performance?

E.g. achieving 65% in my biology exam

E.g. getting 8 hours sleep a night

PROCESS GOALS

CONTROL WHAT YOU CAN CONTROL - PROCESS GOALS

HARD WORK

When trying to be the best, your hard work is a key part, there is no way around it. Hard work is the perfect combination of quality and quantity. One without the other leaves gaps in your performance.

List all of your strengths which help contribute towards your exam performance. These could be lifestyle factors, your subject knowledge, or your support network around you.

Try to list 30 strengths – the more ideas the better!

For example - Exercise physiology, eating habits, ability to stay calm.

Now identify some areas which you need to develop - Try to list 30 areas - the more ideas the better

Can you identify what would have the biggest impact on your performance?

In your lists above, identify the most important strengths to enhance and areas for development. Give each area a score out of 10 as to how big an impact it could have on your performance. It's time to be really honest with yourself here! Write it next to the idea.

Marginal Gains (made famous through GB Cycling) – it is important to identify and work on the areas that are going to have the biggest impact on your performance.

Choose your top 10 areas from both your strengths and areas to develop which you are going to spend your time and energy on.

My top 10

How to stick to your goals:

- Review your goals regularly.
- Measure and assess your progress.
- Make changes if they are needed. Be honest with yourself.
- Keep your goals visible - if they are out of sight, then they may be out of mind.



Outline your revision plan by setting yourself goals to achieve.



Keep track of what you have achieved. Create a timeline so you keep on track.



Define what tasks you need to complete in order to achieve your goals. Tick off complete tasks.

Use your outcome, performance and process goals to start thinking about your daily priorities. Use the daily planner to ensure you are working towards your goals. The aim is for you to gain 10 points every day by completing all your micro goals identified earlier.

PLANNING TO PERFORM

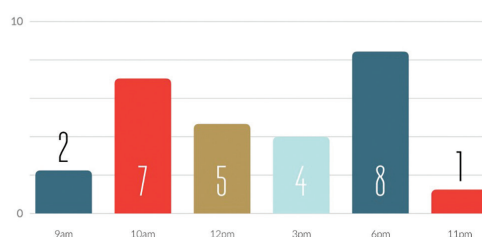
HOW TO APPROACH THE EXAM PERIOD:

Time management and planning is essential to make sure you can realistically keep on track of your work, revision and ultimately your health and wellbeing.

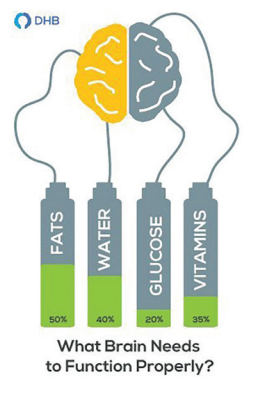
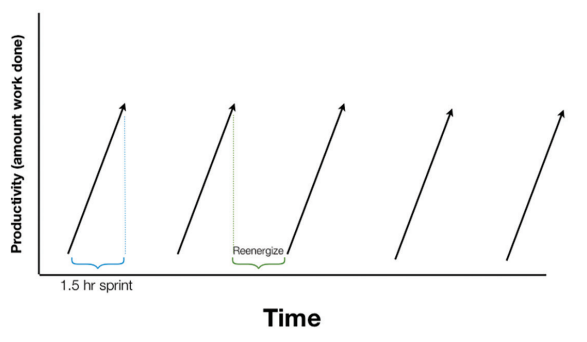
We all have our own internal body clock called a circadian rhythm. All of our physical, mental and behavioural changes follow a 24-hour cycle. There are times when we:

- Have natural energy levels
- When you are 'on fire' – a good time to tackle difficult tasks
- When you are lethargic – a good time to take a break or do a different task.

DAILY ENERGY LEVELS



Your brain uses up more glucose than any other bodily activity. Typically you will have spent most of it after 45-90 minutes. Productive people work smarter and not harder!

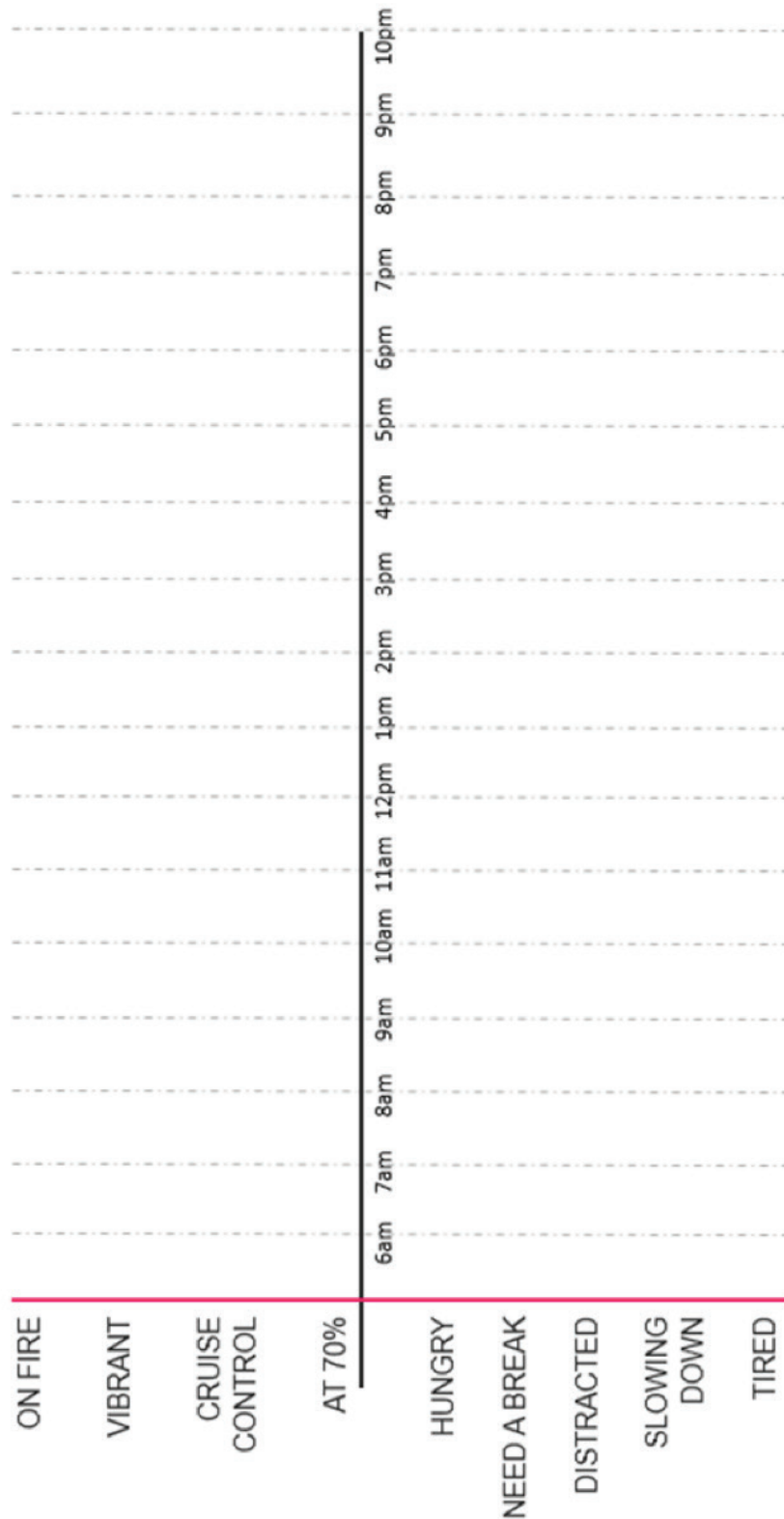


TOP TIPS FOR PLANNING TO PERFORM:

- Plan out your revision timetable so that you can track and monitor your progress. Make sure you allow time for fun and relaxation so that you avoid burning out.
- Leave plenty of time to revise. Giving yourself adequate time will help to boost your confidence and reduce any pre-exam stress as you know you have prepared well.
- During revision aim to work in 45 to 90 minute intervals.
- Track your natural energy levels throughout the day so you know when to tackle harder tasks.
- Take a break as soon as you notice your mind is losing concentration. You will then come back to your revision refreshed. Get up and go for a walk or have a healthy snack.
- Experiment with alternative revision techniques so that revision is more fun and your motivation to study is high.
- Do something completely different to recharge yourself during your exam periods.
- Plan to reward yourself for your hard work after an exam. Do something you enjoy that makes you feel good such as going for a walk, going out for dinner and seeing friends. It's important that you let the stress of the exam go if you have more exams to sit over the next few days or weeks.

YOUR IDEAL WORK SCHEDULE

Plot your day from waking up to going to sleep in hourly blocks and identify when you are naturally one of the following:



PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

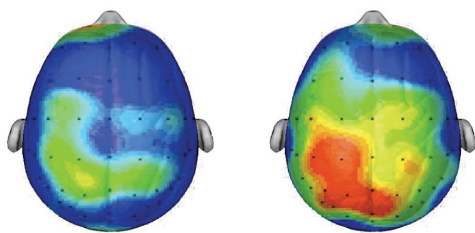
REGULAR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IMPACTS THE BRAIN, IT...

- Boosts your memory
- Improves your concentration
- Helps reduce stress
- Lengthens attention span

PHYSICALLY
ACTIVE
STUDENTS HAVE
MORE ACTIVE
BRAINS

YOUR BRAIN
FUNCTIONS WELL
AFTER EXERCISE
SO TRY CARRYING
OUT SOME REVISION
AFTERWARDS.

Composite of 20 student brains taking the same test



After sitting quietly

After 20 minute walk

Red areas are very active; Blue areas are least active

You should be aiming to do 60 minutes of physical activity a day. Ideally focus on these three areas:

- Cardiovascular - benefits your heart, circulatory system and lungs.
- Strength and muscle endurance - benefits you by making you stronger and/or giving you better endurance, so you can do things longer.
- Flexibility - aimed at giving you greater range of motion in joints and more suppleness in your body.

You don't need to complete 60 minutes a day all at once so think about how this could be broken down into smaller chunks such as:

10 min walk to school

10 min walk at lunch time

30 min after school sports club/gym/swim

10 min stretching/flexibility

Use the following tips to help you plan out how you can keep active on a daily basis:

FIT TIPS:

1. Plan your weekly workouts.
2. Have a morning stretching routine - e.g. yoga poses, meditation, seated stretching exercises.
3. Walk or be active to or from school.
4. Get some fresh air at break and lunch times.
5. Carry out some exercises whilst sitting down - e.g. arm stretches, leg lifts, shoulder rolls etc.
6. Carry out strength exercises at least twice a week such as bicep curls, squats, press ups, sit ups or lunges etc.
7. Carry out housework or tidy your bedroom.
8. Push yourself to work harder each time.
9. Plan to do 30 minutes of cardio exercise at least three days a week.
10. Do something you enjoy so you will keep doing it and stay motivated!

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Weekly Fitness Schedule – plan out your weekly workouts using the table below.

Time / Duration	Activity Type & Details
Goals & Notes	

NUTRITION

– POWER YOURSELF TO PERFORM

You need to fuel your body with the right foods at the right times to energise your system, improve your alertness and sustain you through long exams. The wrong food choices can make you feel sluggish, jittery, burned out and crash your energy levels. Exams are like mental marathons so endurance is the key. Use the following nutrition tips to help you perform at your best on exam day.

P – Preparation

Start the day with a nutritious breakfast. Your brain needs the energy from food to work efficiently. You need to keep your mental focus on your exam and not on your hunger. The best breakfasts should include slow-release carbohydrates, such as porridge oats, whole grain bread or low-sugar muesli, as these provide slow-release energy. Add a protein food, such as milk, 0% fat yoghurt or eggs, to keep you feeling full for longer, you can also add a banana, berries or nuts and seeds. If you really cannot stomach food, then try having a healthy smoothie.



E – Energy Levels

Eat at regular times throughout the day and avoid high sugary foods such as pastries, sweets, caffeine and fizzy drinks. These will give you energy highs and crashes. The aim is to keep your blood sugars and energy levels stable by eating a combination of wholegrain carbohydrates, proteins and healthy fats. Example foods for lunch include wholegrain sandwich, jacket or sweet potatoes with tuna, baked beans or a protein filling. Wholegrain rice or pasta mixed with protein. Wholemeal roll/wrap with cold meat, fish, egg, cheese or peanut butter and salad. Omelette with cheese, ham, mushrooms or tomatoes.

R – Re-hydrate

Drink a glass of water ideally with lemon at the start of the day. Carry a bottle of water around with you and take it into the exam. Limit your caffeine, fizzy or sugary drinks as this will lead to energy highs and lows. Dehydration can cause your brain to shut down, not work effectively and give you headaches. Aim to drink at least 2 litres of water every day to help you think faster, keep focused and give your brain energy to function.

F – Focus Fuels

Snack on brain boosting foods throughout the day such as fresh and dried fruit, nuts and seeds. Snacks such as peanut butter on rice cakes or cottage cheese on celery sticks, cheese and oat cakes or crackers, toast and marmite or peanut butter, non-sugary popcorn, 0% fat yogurt, raw vegetables – carrots, avocado, peppers, tomatoes or a small amount of dark chocolate are all good options.

O – Omega 3s

Omega 3 has been shown to help brain function and increases concentration. It also helps to improve your immune system when your body and mind are stressed. The best source of Omega 3 is oily fish such as mackerel, sardines, salmon and trout. A great lunch would be fish on wholemeal toast. Other foods include walnuts, chia seeds, spinach and eggs. You could even take a supplement of cod liver oil tablets.

NUTRITION

– POWER YOURSELF TO PERFORM

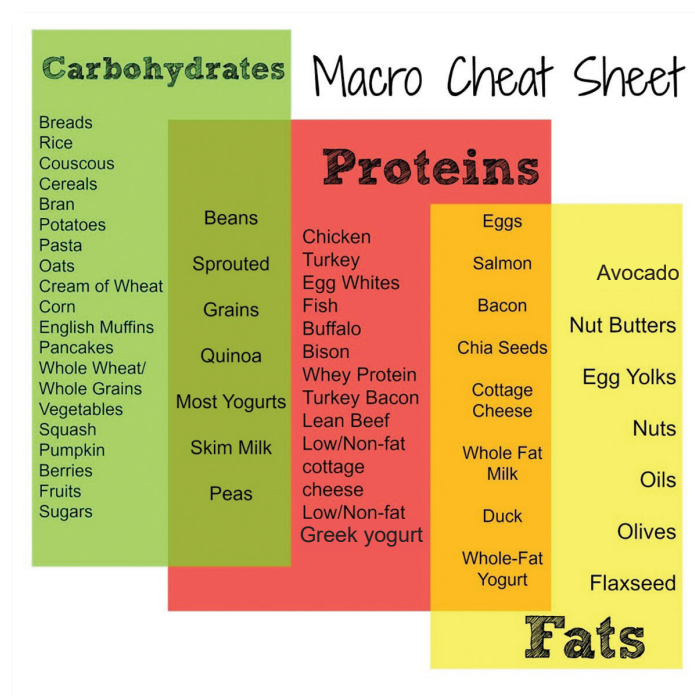
R – Re-think brain blockers

On exam day, stay away from foods made of white flour, such as cookies, cereal bars, pastries, cakes and muffins, which require added time and energy to digest. Also avoid foods that are high in refined sugar, such as chocolates, desserts and sweets as these won't keep you stable during a long exam. Avoid sugary, fizzy or energy drinks and limit your caffeine, as it can increase your nervousness.

Don't have turkey before an exam as it contains L-tryptophan, an essential amino acid which makes you feel sleepy. Avoid heavy carbohydrate meals as these can make you feel sluggish if eaten in large quantities. Eat lighter meals making sure it is enough to feel satisfied but not so much as to feel full and don't try out foods that you haven't had before!

M – Macro-nutrients

Have a combination of protein, fats and carbs at every meal on exam day. You need protein to provide amino acids that create dopamine and norepinephrine. These brain chemicals make you feel more alert, attentive and energetic. You need complex carbs that turn into glucose which fuels your brain. Carbs also create serotonin which can help you feel calm and put you in a positive frame of mind about your test. Having some healthy fats can keep you feeling full longer and help stabilize your blood sugar levels.



MIGHTY MAGNESIUM

Magnesium is involved in over 1000 enzymatic reactions in the body. It's vitally important in providing our cells with energy

Green vegetables
Nuts
Pulses
Fish
Bananas

UP THE B'S

B vitamins are directly involved in creating energy at a cellular level & will give you an energy boost

Green vegetables
Asparagus / Spinach
Broccoli
Yoghurt
Chicken / Turkey / Salmon
Whole Grains / Brown rice
Almonds / Pecans
Eggs

Pre-plan your meals during your exams so that you give your brains and bodies the best possible fuel for maximum efficiency and therefore greatest success.

NUTRITION

- PERSONAL NUTRITION PLAN

	BREAKFAST	LUNCH	DINNER	SNACKS	DRINKS	EXERCISE
MONDAY						
TUESDAY						
WEDNESDAY						
THURSDAY						
FRIDAY						
SATURDAY						
SUNDAY						

NUTRITION

– BREAKFAST SMOOTHIES

Smoothies are easy to make and can really help if you can't stomach breakfast or are short of time in the morning. Fuel yourself with the right brain boosting nutrients by trying out some of these yummy smoothie recipes.

BANANA, BLUEBERRIES AND PEANUT BUTTER BLAST



This delicious blueberry banana blast is just the thing for breakfast! Packed with energising banana, satiating oats and some peanut butter for your protein.

- 1 x small banana
- 1 large tbsp. peanut butter
- 1/2 cup of blueberries
- 1 tbsp. oats
- 1/2 cup 0% fat plain yoghurt
- 1/2 cup water / ice / almond milk

VERY BERRY SUPER SHAKE



This shake is packed with protein, fibre, healthy fats, phyto-nutrients and probiotics.

- 12 oz water / ice
- 1 cup spinach
- 2 cubes frozen mixed berries
- 1/2 cup 0% plain yoghurt
- 1 tbsp. walnuts
- 1 tbsp. ground flaxseed

DELICIOUS PINK DETOX



Help detox your system with this delicious pink detox. Beetroot is a liver-cleanser and avocado will help lower blood pressure, lubricate the joints and is an anti-inflammatory.

- 1/4 avocado
- 1 celery stalk
- 1/2 cup strawberries
- 1/2 beetroot
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1/2 apple
- 3 ice cubes
- 1/4 cup coconut water

THE ENERGISER



With a kick of protein, healthy fats and fibre, you'll be doing your body a favour by providing it with this well-balanced, energy-inducing drink.

- 1 cup kale
- 1/2 banana
- 5 strawberries
- 1/2 small apple
- 1/4 cup almonds
- 1 tbsp. chia seeds
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 cup almond milk
- 1/2 cup ice cubes

BREAKFAST SMOOTHIES

– BUILD YOUR OWN

Use this guide to help you build your own delicious smoothie.

PICK A LIQUID

- Water / Ice
- Almond milk (unsweetened)
- Cow's milk
- Soy milk (unsweetened)
- Hemp milk (unsweetened)
- Iced green tea
- Coconut water

PICK A FRUIT

- Apples
- Bananas
- Berries
- Cherries
- Dates
- Pineapple / mango
- Frozen mixed fruit
- Lemon juice

PICK A VEGGIE

- Dark leafy greens: Spinach / Swiss chard / kale
- Pumpkin / sweet potato
- Beets / beet greens
- Cucumber / celery
- Frozen veg mix
- Celery
- Beetroot

PICK A PROTEIN / CARB

- 0% fat Greek yoghurt
- Oats
- Granola
- Quinoa

PICK A HEALTHY FAT

- Avocado
- Walnuts
- Flax, hemp, chia seeds
- Cashews
- Almonds
- Peanut and nut butters

PICK A TOPPER

- Coconut
- Dark chocolate swirls
- Cinnamon
- Fresh fruit
- Sunflower seeds

SMOOTHIE NAME

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SMOOTHIE NAME

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SMOOTHIE NAME

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REST AND RECOVERY

Taking a break makes a big difference to our day to day stress management. Without a break, we risk burnout so book things in your diary which are relaxing and time-out from the norm.

We all need something to take our minds off the day to day. Good outlets are activities that completely engage our bodies and minds. These are neurologically important activities that give our brain a chance to get back to neutral, to re-boot and re-charge.

THE POWER OF REST:

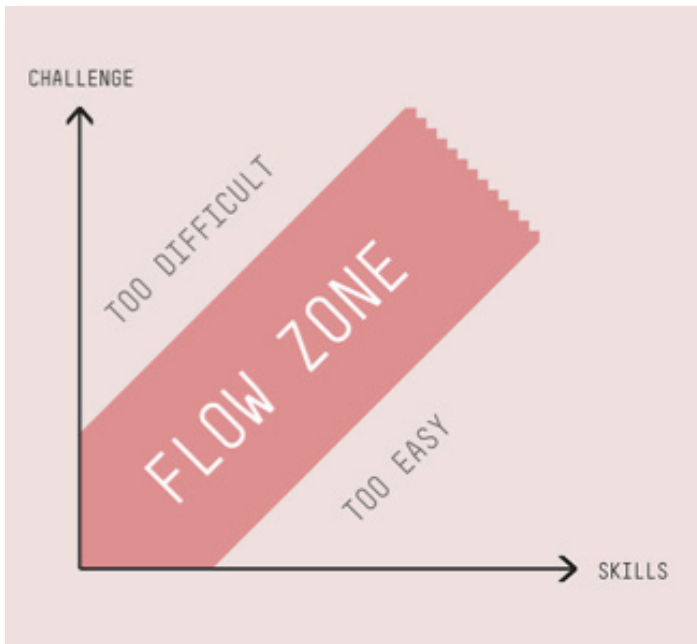
- Regeneration of our bodies
- Required for life
- Helps us survive
- Renew and restore cells
- Keeps us functioning well
- Rebuild and revive ourselves
- Productivity and concentration
- Efficiency at school or work
- For growth and development
- To replenish our muscles, bones, tissues and cells



GET YOURSELF IN THE 'FLOW'

Flow experiences can occur in different ways for different people. These are moments in which your mind becomes so entirely absorbed in the activity that you "forget yourself" and begin to act effortlessly.

You must see the activities as voluntary, enjoyable (intrinsically motivating), and it must require skill and be challenging (but not too challenging) with clear goals towards success.



How to stick to your goals:

- Drawing
- Writing
- Reading
- Meditation
- Yoga
- Learning a new skill
- Mindfulness
- Sport
- Playing an instrument
- Jigsaw puzzles
- Dancing
- Running
- Painting

To be more productive, healthy and creative, we need to make break-taking a regular practice.

REST AND RECOVERY

Map out your week with the time you can spend on each of the different categories.

Map out your week with the time you can spend on each of the different categories.

	School / Work	Family / Friends	Physical Activity	Rest / Relaxation
Monday				
Tuesday				
Wednesday				
Thursday				
Friday				
Saturday				

SLEEP

WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU DON'T GET ENOUGH SLEEP?

- Reduced decision-making skills
- Poorer memory
- Reduced concentration
- Reduced work efficiency
- Shortened attention span
- Reduced alertness
- Reduced awareness of the environment and situation
- Slower than normal reaction time



Here are some top tips for getting a better night's sleep. The key is to make some small changes to your sleep routine and give it some time to notice a difference in your sleep habits.

TOP TIPS

1. **CONSISTENCY:** Keep a relatively consistent bedtime and wake time. Staying up late and sleeping in on weekends can disrupt your routine during the week.
2. **WORK:** Complete your revision or work by a certain time.
3. **RELAXATION/ROUTINE:** Develop a pre-bed routine that is relaxing and familiar. Television, work, computer use, movies and deep/stressful discussions late at night can disrupt sleep.
4. **UNPLUG:** Shut off all electronics at least 30 mins before you go to sleep.
5. **STIMULANTS:** Eliminate stimulants like caffeine and sugar, especially later in the day.
6. **EXERCISE:** Incorporate this daily but not too close to bedtime.
7. **FULLNESS:** Eating a dinner that makes you overly full can disturb sleep.
8. **THOUGHTS:** Write them all down before you go to bed so you have a clear mind.

The perfect night's sleep starts long before you get into bed. Use this example sleep routine to help you plan your own.

HOURS BEFORE BED ▶



SLEEP – MY PERSONAL SLEEP ROUTINE

Your personal sleep routine: plan out a perfect evening to help you get the best possible night's sleep. Think about two different routines that fit in with your weekly schedule and commitments.

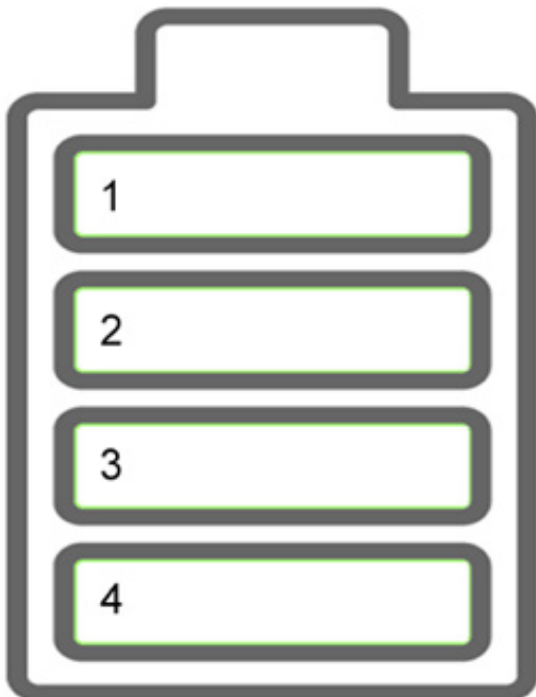
ROUTINE 1:

5 pm 11 pm

ROUTINE 2:

5 pm 11 pm

Write down your top 4 ways that you are going to use to recharge yourself.



1

2

3

4

TOP TIPS TO RECHARGE:

- Turn your phone off!
- Have some alone time
- Try a new hobby
- Get some fresh air
- Go for a walk
- Have a bath
- Try some yoga or stretching
- Do a 5 minute meditation
- Listen to music
- Read a book
- Watch a feel good film

MENTAL ENERGY

The mind is one of the biggest contributors to energy levels. The benefits of having high levels of mental energy include happiness, confidence, focus, and increased willpower, motivation, and productivity.

What is mental energy?

- Mood - thinking good – feeling good – performing well
- Motivation and willpower – initiative and procrastination
- Focus – effectiveness and duration
- Confidence – perception - performance

Why should you boost your mental energy?

- Accomplish more
- Feel better
- Avoid fatigue



TOP TIPS FOR MANAGING YOUR MENTAL ENERGY:

1. Practise negative visualisation - negative visualisation is practised to lessen the impact if these scenarios do come true.
2. Surround yourself with great people - building relationships makes us happy and gives us energy. Spend time with people who think positively, and have a lot of energy, and talk in a positive tone. It will make you think more positively and give you energy.
3. Think positively - thinking positive thoughts will make you feel more positive. Feeling more positive and optimistic will boost mental energy.
4. Declutter your mind – you will be very busy and have a lot of things on your mind, so declutter it by setting reminders and keeping a diary, schedule or timetable. To declutter your mind, keep as much as you can outside of your brain. Keep a to do list.
5. Go outside - exposing your skin and eyes to sunlight will give you Vitamin D, which can boost energy.
6. Have fun! - don't forget to allocate time to friends and family, hobbies, etc. These activities provide excitement and keep you motivated. Having fun stimulates your brain in a way that improves energy levels.
7. Stimulate your mind - keep your mind stimulated but not overworked. Mental challenge will give you energy, but too much may leave you fatigued. If you stick too close to the same routine, your brain can go into "auto-pilot." Try breaking your routine. Learn something new. Go on a spontaneous adventure to give yourself a fresh perspective.
8. Take time out – great way to boost mental energy.
9. Focus on what is in your control - worrying about or hoping for something that we don't have an impact on can cause anxiety. List what you're currently worrying about or hoping for and differentiate what is in your control from what is not.
10. Take responsibility for your emotions - emotions have a strong effect on your energy levels. If you are feeling sad or embarrassed, you will have less energy. If you are feeling proud or confident, you will have more energy.

MENTAL ENERGY

Mental energy boosting strategies:

- Staying relaxed under pressure - “good nervous.”
- Focusing on what’s important and letting go of everything else.
- Rebounding from mistakes, bad breaks and failures.
- Handling last minute self-doubts and negative thinking.
- Using mental rehearsal for upcoming performances.
- Motivating yourself by setting personally meaningful and compelling goals.
- Recognising mental traps and avoiding them.
- Developing self-confidence and a positive, go-for-it attitude.
- Watch videos of inspirational people to help you become stronger.



My mental energy game plan

Which zone do you operate in the most?

Which zones do you need to focus on?

How are you going to improve your mental energy?

STRESS MANAGEMENT

STRESS IS A STATE OF MENTAL OR EMOTIONAL STRAIN OR TENSION RESULTING FROM ADVERSE OR DEMANDING CIRCUMSTANCES.

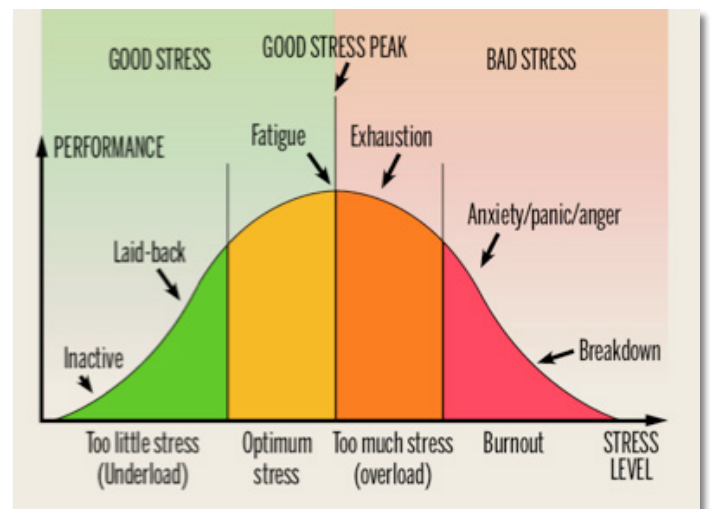
WHY SHOULD YOU MANAGE YOUR STRESS LEVELS?

Everyone gets stressed during exams but it's important not to let it get out of control. Some stress can be a good thing as it motivates us to work hard, can make you feel mentally alert and ready to tackle exam challenges. However, if stress levels get out of hand, it can stop us from learning and performing at our best, so it's important to address your stress to keep it under control.

You'll be less stressed if you've got an idea of how the lead-up to your exams is going to look, so plan what you're going to study and when, and stick it up on the wall. Break it down into manageable chunks and start working through it at the rate you planned.

WHAT IS EXAM ANXIETY?

- Butterflies in your stomach
- Headaches, tiredness or shakiness
- Excessive worry about upcoming exams
- Exam fear
- Apprehension about the consequences
- Difficulty concentrating
- Inability to recall information
- Panic attacks or rapid breathing



MANAGING YOUR STRESS LEVELS:

It is completely possible to manage some of the stress that's brought on by exams if you use different strategies. The four main areas which can contribute to your exam stress / anxiety are:

1. LIFESTYLE FACTORS

- inadequate rest
- poor nutrition
- too many stimulants
- insufficient exercise
- not scheduling available time
- not prioritising commitments

2. INFORMATION NEEDS

- strategies for exam-taking
- exam information, dates and exam locations
- knowledge of how to apply anxiety reduction techniques

3. PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS

- feeling little or no control
- negative thinking and self-criticism
- irrational thinking about exams and outcomes
- pressuring yourself

4. POOR STUDYING STYLES

- Inefficient: inconsistent content coverage; trying to memorise the textbook; binge studying; all-night studying before exams
- Ineffective: reading without understanding; cannot recall the material; not making revision notes; not revising

If you're finding things tough, ask for help.

STRESS MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

USE THE FOLLOWING STRATEGIES TO HELP MANAGE YOUR STRESS LEVELS:

POSITIVE SELF-TALK - IT'S AS SIMPLE AS A-B-C:

A = Activating Event - While taking a difficult test you begin to feel physically tense.

B = Belief - "I know I can do this, I will do some deep breaths to re-focus myself and feel more relaxed."

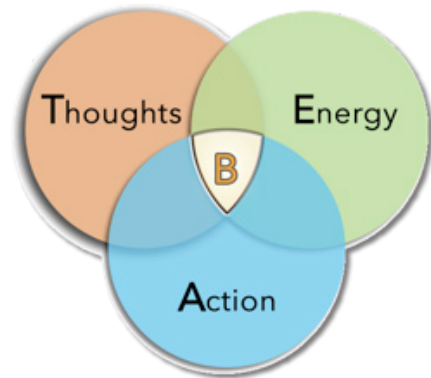
C = Consequences - You calm yourself down, feel a lot better and feel able to complete the test.



A - Plan in advance what you will do when the activating event occurs.

B - Develop a set of positive or rational self-statements which you can practice.

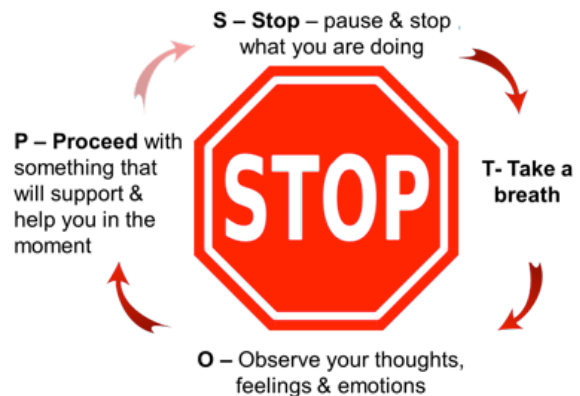
C - You will help calm yourself down and re-divert your energy to being more positive.



B = Best You Can Be

HOW TO CALM DOWN IN UNDER A MINUTE

- Breathe in through your nose and on a slow count of three.
- Push your stomach out as you breathe in.
- Breathe out through your mouth on a slow count of six.
- Repeat two more times



THE MINDFUL UNPLUG

- Try to unplug from technology everyday
- Switch off from technology at least 30 mins to 1 hr before going to sleep
- Appreciate the world around you and what you are doing rather than being governed by your phone
- Put your phone away and on silent while you are concentrating on tasks / revision / homework
- Learn to have the control to not be obsessed with your phone!
- Choose some time each day and week to switch off and unplug from technology

STRESS MANAGEMENT

– STRESS BUSTING PLAN

1. Planning and priorities – write down a list of things you need to do to be fully prepared for the exam period – number them in order of priority.
2. Tackling the problems – you can only control the controllables. Write down everything you can control and focus on to help you with the exam period and try to let go of the things you can't control.
3. Self-statements – write down all the statements you could use to help you when you are thinking negatively prior or during an exam.
4. Dealing with your emotions – identify any stressful situations you may face and write down a couple of strategies which you can do to help you deal with that situation better.

1. Planning and priorities :

2. Things I can control:

Things I can't control:

3. Self-statements:

4. Dealing with your emotions

Stressful situations:

Strategy:

REFOCUS ON PERFORMANCE

Fine-tuning your exam preparation can help you maximise your marks.

TOP WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR EXAM PERFORMANCE

1. DEVELOP YOUR PLAN

- When will you start studying?
- How many hours each week will you block out to study?
- Which topics do you need further clarification on?
- Which homework assignments will you review?
- How many practice exams will you do?
- How many times will you review your notes and your textbook readings?
- What distractions are you likely to face, and how will you overcome them?

2. DON'T DO ANY LAST-MINUTE STUDYING RIGHT BEFORE THE EXAM

It is common to spend the 10 minutes before an exam doing some last-minute studying. This may provide some psychological comfort, but overall it does more harm than good. 10 minutes before an exam, you either know the required information or you don't. If you frantically review information during this time, you'll become more stressed and anxious. This will negatively affect your performance.

Instead, make use of the time before the start of the exam to relax. Visualise yourself answering the questions correctly, and imagine yourself in a state of peace and confidence. Take a deep breath. Inhale for four seconds, then exhale for four seconds. Repeat this as many times as necessary to calm down.

3. TURN YOUR FOCUS TOWARD THE PROCESS AND AWAY FROM THE OUTCOME

When professional athletes perform in crunch time it is always interesting to know what was going through their mind at the time. A common reply is "I just took the shot the same way I've taken it thousands of times before in practice."

It's this focus on the process, rather than the outcome, that ironically allows professional athletes to achieve better outcomes.

Concentrate on staying calm, on thinking through each question carefully, and on analysing what each question is really asking rather than thinking 'I must ace this exam!'.

4. MAKE USE OF EXAM TAKING TECHNIQUES

You might know the information like the back of your hand, but if you're not equipped with the necessary exam-taking skills, you won't get the grades you're hoping for.

- Practice doing past papers in exam conditions and different environments
- Be familiar with the exam structure
- Look through the entire exam at the start
- Know how much time you should be spending on each question
- If you get stuck move on and come back to it

RE-FOCUS ON PERFORMANCE

Be calm, confident and focused

Develop a winning mindset and perform at your best whilst under pressure. To achieve peak performance and succeed, mental preparation is necessary.

YOUR OUTCOME GOAL IS THERE TO MOTIVATE YOU, TRY TO FOCUS ON THE PROCESS WHEN YOU ARE PERFORMING.

USE PERFORMANCE GOALS TO CHECK YOU ARE ON TARGET TO ACHIEVE YOUR OUTCOME GOAL.

FOCUS ON YOUR PROCESS GOALS DURING REVISION AND EXAMS.

BELIEF

We achieve so much in our lives but all too often the moment passes and the power of the achievement is lost too. Over the next few weeks and through your exams keep a Belief List.

Your Belief List includes things you have achieved, things you are proud of, things that make you feel good. Nothing is wrong and you can make it as long as you want!

BELIEF LIST

- Great relationship with my family
- 74% on past paper
- Personal Best in High Jump

BELIEF LIST

Remember to include things that make you feel good before going into an exam. Can this be the last thing you look at before your exam?

Try to look at your list often, every day, if you are having a wobble or just need a lift have a look and remind yourself just how good you are.

PREPARE TO PERFORM – DAILY PLANNER

You have learned about the importance of eating the right things, sleeping, relaxing, chunking revision and turning off your phone. Now is the time to prepare yourself each day so that you can perform at your best. Plan your day using the table below. To be 'performance ready' you need to be making the right choices. For each of the activities listed below, give yourself one point - the aim is to get 10 points a day by doing 10 of these things.

- Eating an appropriate breakfast
- Eating an appropriate and healthy snack/s
- Exercising
- Eating a healthy lunch
- Planning chunked revision
- Having time to relax
- Having time to socialise

- Eating a healthy evening meal
- Turning off your phone
- Having 7-8 hours sleep
- Drinking plenty of water
- Making a smoothie
- Planning time to calm yourself down

My daily priorities:

6am

7am

8am

9am

10am

11am

12pm

1pm

2pm

3pm

4pm

5pm

6pm

7pm

8pm

9pm

10pm

11pm

Number of performance points = _____

I am performance ready (tick box)

I am not performance ready (tick box) and tomorrow I need to.....

PiXL

Prepare

to Perform