


# How to support and manage your child's physical and mental well-being during exams

Mark Willis







As loud as you like, make a sound that expresses  
how you feel when I say the next word....





# EXAMS!



**Everyone** gets a bit stressed during exam time, student, teachers, and you the parents. This is normal because exams matter, we care about how we perform. If we didn't care, we wouldn't worry! A bit of stress can be a good thing.



It's useful to understand a bit about the science of stress and how it works, so that you can have more control over it and learn what to do to help yourself.

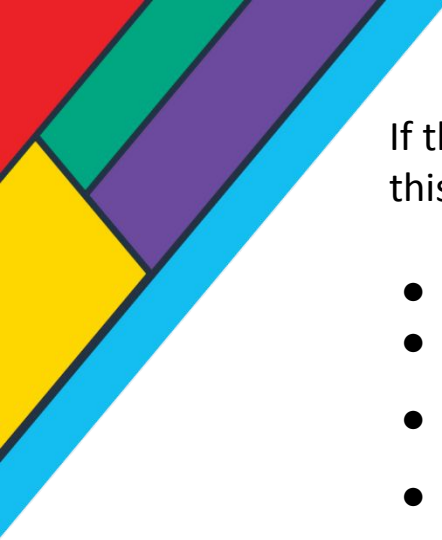


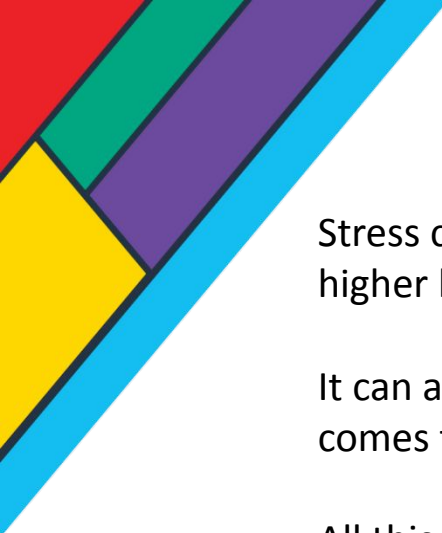
# The threat system



If the threat system is continuously triggered due to constant stress this can feel extremely uncomfortable. Symptoms may include;

- Feeling irritable, aggressive, impatient or wound up
- Feeling over-burdened, overwhelmed, afraid
- Feeling like your thoughts are racing and you can't switch off
- Feeling snappy and unable to enjoy yourself
- Feeling low and uninterested in life
- Feeling like you've lost your sense of humour
- Feeling a sense of dread
- Feeling worried about your health
- Feeling neglected or lonely
- Not being able to sleep soundly
- Your appetite might be affected





Stress can interfere with your cognitive functioning, which includes higher level brain functions like learning, memory and problem solving.

It can also affect your sleep, and sleep is extremely important when it comes to maintaining a healthy brain and good performance.

All this becomes especially relevant when taking exams!

It's important to learn how to lower your levels of stress and deal with pressure in a healthy way. So what can you do?



# Get Perspective (Zoom Out) – There **is** life after exams

You'll hear this from lots of people but please do take it on board – **it's true!**



## Get organised

***“The best preparation for tomorrow is doing your best today.”*** H. Jackson Brown, Jr.

There's a definite end point to your exams so it's what you do in the meantime that matters.

Good planning can help you feel in control.

### **First, work out the basics;**

Which exams do you have when?

How much you have to revise for each one?

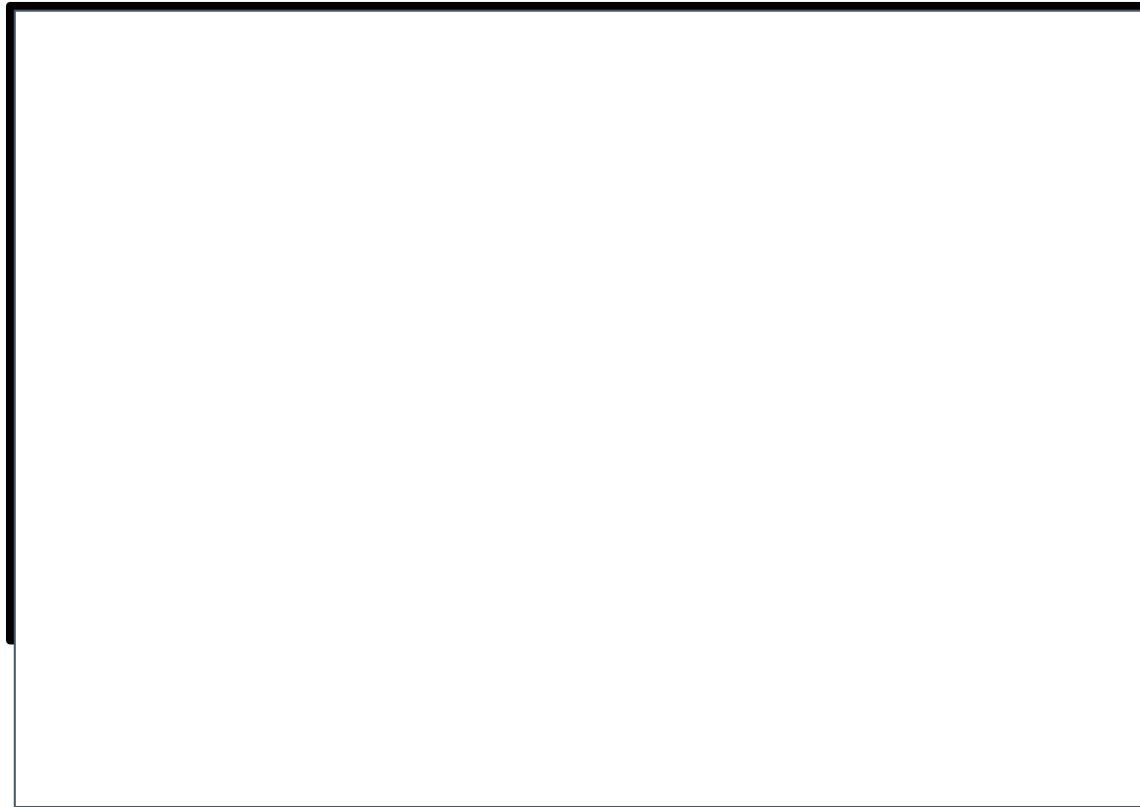
Break your revision down into small chunks, and form a plan.


Once you've got a plan, you will know what you have to work on to get it all done on time. Be self disciplined and stick to this plan, it's in your own interests.



# Take frequent breaks







**Eat well.** The right kinds of food are really important for our physical and mental health, we are what we eat. Avoid highs and lows of energy, by eating slow-release foods like bread, rice, pasta, fruit and veg.

**Keep well hydrated.** It's easy to not realise how thirsty you have got when engrossed in work but water is essential to good mental functioning so make sure you get enough.

**Make it easy for yourself** by thinking about when and where you work best. Some people like to get up early to work, others like working late. It's different for everyone so find what suits you.

**Keep active.** Exercising is one of the quickest and most effective ways to de-stress, and is one of the tried and tested steps to wellbeing. Fresh air will clear your head and perk you up.



**Get enough sleep.**



Don't set yourself unachievable goals, else you'll be setting yourself up for failure. There is limited time in a day so be realistic about what you can achieve.



Make sure you keep the enjoyment in your life. It's tempting to do nothing but work when the workload feels overwhelming but this is counterproductive. Your brain can't focus well if it doesn't get a break.

Avoid stimulants. Caffeine, alcohol and drugs are detrimental to your energy and concentration in the long term so don't live on coffee! It'll also affect your sleep which, as you know, is essential.



**Get support from friends and family**



**A problem shared is a problem halved.**



## Visualise success



Practice letting your worries go



**And Breathe!**



