



EXAM SURVIVAL: TIPS FOR YOU

from Nicola Morgan
author of *Blame My Brain*
Know Your Brain
and *The Teenage Guide to Stress*

Exams are usually stressful and most people don't enjoy them. I can't remove *all* your exam stress; besides, *some* stress is good because it produces adrenaline to help you perform at your best. But I have tips to help you avoid bad stress and achieve your potential, based on years of experience and knowledge of how brains and bodies work.

Start these tips at least 30 days before exams begin (if possible):

1. Make sure you know well in advance how each exam is structured and how many questions you have to answer.
2. Don't bottle up your worries – talk to someone; ask for help early.
3. Plan your revision time-table in advance; and include rest time.
4. Practise relaxation techniques/anti-panic strategy. (Details on my website.)
5. Spend at least 30mins a day doing one of these: reading a book you like, having a bath, listening to music, walking, exercising, watching a funny film, doing a hobby, or something else that relaxes you. Don't use a computer or phone during this time.
6. Learn how to get a better night's sleep – tips on my website and my Sleep hand-out.
7. Find brain-fuelling foods that you *like* and make sure you eat before work/exam. Plan a pre-exam snack. (Info and suggestions on my website.)
8. Always have water with you when you're working.
9. Avoid fizzy or sugary drinks.
10. Brains usually concentrate best for about 25 minutes; during revision, give yourself breaks. Breathe deeply; move about; loosen your neck and shoulders.
11. Get plenty of fresh air. A brisk walk has huge anti-stress benefits, is a very good way of thinking things through and pushes more oxygen to your brain.
12. Some people work better when they fidget. If you do, have blu-tack (eg) with you.
13. A bit of chocolate (preferably dark) is a good idea – before an exam for an energy boost (but you *also* need protein, eg nuts) and after as a reward. You deserve it!
14. After an exam, don't ask other people what they wrote. It's a sure-fire way to be more stressed. Now is the time to put that exam behind you. It's over!
15. Remember: exams may be stressful but they are not the most important things in the world. If something goes wrong, don't beat yourself up. There will be other ways to achieve your goals, and more chances later. Move on and grow strong.

Good luck ☺

More information at www.nicolamorgan.com - Copyright © Nicola Morgan 2014
From BRAIN STICKS™: multimedia teaching materials about the brain