

1 PREPARE YOURSELF

The first step to controlling pre-exam anxiety is to feel as prepared as possible.

- Try to get an early night the night before so you feel well rested.
- Eat a good meal before the exam so hunger doesn't distract you.
- Avoid caffeine which can make anxiety worse.
- Wear comfortable clothes to the exam.
- Make sure you have everything you need for the exam.
- Arrive on time for the exam to avoid any lateness anxiety - plan your journey and morning in advance

2 USE RELAXATION TECHNIQUES

When the anxiety hits, try using some relaxation techniques to calm yourself.

- Box breathing/deep breathing
- Whole body muscle relaxation
- Visualisation (imagining a calm, safe space)
- Practice mindfulness and being in the present
- Listen to relaxing music (before the exam)

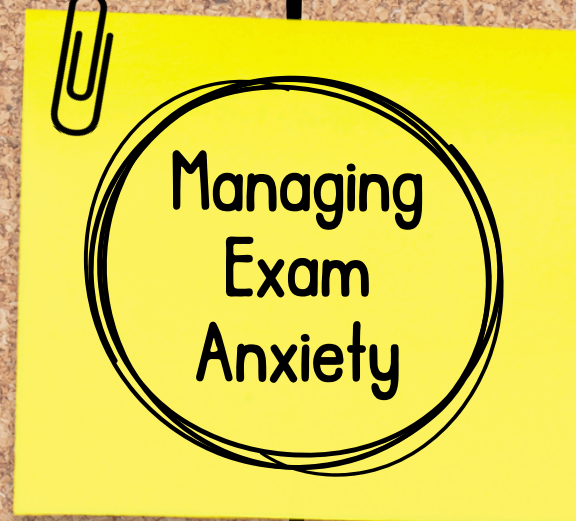
3 REFRAME THOSE ANXIOUS THOUGHTS

1) Identify any negative/distorted thoughts.

E.g. 'I am going to fail.' 'If I fail, I am worthless.' 'Everyone else is going to do better than me.'

2) Challenge the thoughts using methods such as:

- De-catastrophising - e.g. 'I probably won't fail, but if I do, it's not the end of the world.'
- Questioning - e.g. 'Is this thought accurate? Is this thought helping me?'
- Put thoughts on trial - find evidence for and against the validity of the thought before accepting it.
- 'How do I know this thought is true?'



4 TRY THESE EXAM TECHNIQUE TIPS

Some tips for making exams/tests feel easier when anxiety is high:

- Memory dump - write important facts/theories/formulae/dates down as soon as you receive the test
- Consider how many marks the question is worth - don't spend too long on the 1 or 2 mark questions
- Take an educated guess - a guess is always better than leaving a question blank. Your existing knowledge may help if you get stuck on a question, so take a guess even if you're unsure.
- Leave time at the end to check your answers if you can. Mistakes can easily be made but checking answers over at the end can help you identify and fix these.

5 PRACTICE POSITIVE THINKING

Positive thinking can go a long way in helping you to manage your anxiety.

- Make a habit of using positive self-talk. Try making a list of positive statements to practice saying to yourself - e.g. 'I can do this!' 'I am competent and capable.' 'I work hard and do my best.'
- Link positive statements to physical cues, by thinking positive things when doing everyday actions like brushing your teeth or getting dressed
- Use these statements that you have practiced during your exam/test. It will be challenging to do when anxious but will help curb your anxiety and build your confidence.

6 STUDY EFFECTIVELY

- Establish a routine which includes time to study but also breaks and fun things to do.
- Create a designated calm space to study which is free from distractions such as the TV or mobile phone.
- Focus on the quality of study, not the quantity. Better to study well for short periods, than study for hours but not take any information in.
- Set specific study goals that you want to achieve.
- Quiz yourself to make info stick. Doing past papers is better than just reading notes.
- Get a change of scenery if you're struggling to focus.
- Look after your body and mind