

## Are you stressed about exams?

Feeling stressed or anxious about exams is common.

Your body reacts to stress in many ways.

Signs include:

headaches, stomach aches, changes in appetite,  
sleep problems and trouble concentrating.

Here are a few things that you can do to manage exam stress.

### Have a plan

A study plan helps you make the most of your study time. It can help you feel more in control and may relieve some of your exam stress. Here are a few tips to help you get started:

- Prepare:** Find out what type of exam it is (e.g., multiple choice, short answer, essay format). Gather your study materials (e.g., notes, handouts, quizzes).
- Create sections:** Break sections down into manageable chunks; figure out which areas you may need to spend a little more time on. Try to tackle your hardest subjects at the beginning of your study session.
- Make a schedule:** Use a calendar, white board or wall planner to schedule your study time. Add reminder notes about what sections to study. Set reminder alarms on your phone or watch to help keep you on track.
- Practice:** Writing practice exams can help you prepare for the exam and may reduce some of your exam stress.



Don't forget to take regular breaks and schedule time for outside activities. 30 minutes of activity a day can help to clear your head, boost your mood, and help you study.



While you are studying, use a timer for each section. If you haven't finished when the timer is done, decide if you should keep going, move on to the next section, or schedule more time later.

### When and where to study

**When:** Plan to study when you're at your best. Some people study better in the morning while others do better in the evening.

**Where:** Everyone's study space is different. Whether it's a quiet room at home, the public library or a coffee shop, be sure to create a space away from distractions (e.g., email, television, video games, or phone).

Try to limit your web browsing to the pages needed to complete your studying. If you find it hard to turn off your phone when studying, there are free apps available that can remind you to stop using it or automatically silence it during set times.

#### Remember: Your bed is best for sleeping, not studying.

While it may be tempting to study in bed, you may start to associate your bed with exam stress which can affect your sleep. There is also a chance that you'll fall asleep while studying.

### Ask for help

- Find out if your school has peer tutoring groups.
- Talk to your teacher about getting help during lunch, before school, or after class.
- Find a 'study buddy'; ask someone to study with you.

**If you're feeling stressed, talking to someone you trust such as a friend, family member, or school counsellor can help.**

## What is your learning style?

### Do you learn by hearing? (Auditory learner)

Try reading your notes aloud.

Voice record key points and play them back to yourself.

Study in a group where you can discuss the materials.

### Do you learn by seeing? (Visual learner)

Use colours in your notes and create flash cards or sticky notes for key points.

Use a white board to break down more complex sections.

### Do you learn by doing? (Kinaesthetic learner)

Try working with a partner or in a group.

Role-play by demonstrating/teaching sections to your partner.

Create models or diagrams to highlight key points.

### Do you learn by reading? (Reading or writing-preference learner)

Read your notes again, rewrite your notes and reword key points.

Summarize information from diagrams, charts and graphs into words or statements.

**Everyone has their own style. Use the methods that work best for you.**

## Before your exam

**Prepare:** Gather everything you need for the exam the night before (e.g., pens, scrap paper, calculator).

**Give yourself enough time:** Aim to be at the exam location at least 20 minutes early to allow for any unexpected delays.

**Eat regularly:** You may feel anxious before an exam, but it's important to eat regularly to provide your brain with enough energy to stay focused. If your last meal was more than 2 hours before the start of the exam, consider having a small snack (e.g., greek yogurt with fruit, half a sandwich, or a fruit and nut bar).

**Drink water:** Be sure to drink enough water to help you stay alert. Avoid caffeine from drinks such as pop, tea, coffee, or energy drinks. Too much caffeine can make you feel anxious or give you an upset stomach.

## During your exam

**Pace yourself:** Begin by briefly reviewing the exam. Make note of which questions are worth more marks or may take a little more time to answer.

**Start with what you know:** You don't always have to start at the beginning. Answer the questions you know best and then move on.

**Slow down:** Take time to read each question carefully.

**Breathe:** If you can't remember the answer to a question, don't panic. Take a few deep, slow breaths (5 seconds in, 5 seconds out) to relax. Move on to the next question. Sometimes other questions on the exam can trigger your memory.

## After your exam

**Celebrate:** Once you've written your exam, it's important to let go of the stress it may have caused. Reward yourself by hanging out with friends or doing something you enjoy.

## Helpful Phone Numbers (Open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week)

Kids Help Phone: 1-800-668-6868

Mental Health Help Line: 1-877-303-2642

Health Link: 811

## Study Resources

For practice exams visit: [www.exambank.com](http://www.exambank.com)

For videos, interactive activities, and more visit: [www.learnalberta.ca](http://www.learnalberta.ca)

To order free copies of this resource visit <https://dol.datacm.com/>  
Login ID: mentalhealthresources Password: mh2016

## Stress Resources

[www.youth.anxietybc.com](http://www.youth.anxietybc.com)

[www.kidshelpphone.ca](http://www.kidshelpphone.ca)

[www.fosteringresilience.com](http://www.fosteringresilience.com)

[www.kidshealth.org](http://www.kidshealth.org)

[www.mindyourmind.ca](http://www.mindyourmind.ca)

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