



Exam Stress

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Introduction to exam stress

Some people seem to work well with exam stress and find that it gives them the extra buzz to focus their energy on revision and course work. Others find it a tough task but manageable. Some find that their levels of stress rise too far and that the effect is that they cannot function so well. They may find it hard to concentrate, to think clearly, to sleep and to eat. There may be a variety of causes for this and so it may be helpful to explore a variety of possible solutions.

Physical effects of stress

When we are anxious, we tend to breathe in slightly more than we breathe out. This leads to slightly more oxygen being carried in our blood and to an increase in adrenalin and cortisol. These are useful if we are in physical danger as they can help us to fight or run for our lives. They are unhelpful in exam situations because they make it harder to think clearly, to relax or to sleep. We feel tense, irritable and panic. However, we can learn to change this.

Learning some breathing exercises can make a dramatic difference because they change the levels of adrenalin and cortisol in our system.

E.g. breathe in for the count of 4, hold for 7 and out for the count of 8.



Useful links

Student Minds – [exam stress](#)

NHS – [stress busters](#)

Mental Health Foundation:

[Mindfulness: 10 minute practice exercise.](#)

[Three-minute mindfulness breathing space.](#)

[Stress and the mind: quick-fix relaxation exercise.](#)

[Stress and the mind: full works.](#)

[Stress and relaxation: full works.](#)

Mind – [14 ways to beat exam stress](#)

CALM - [Stressed? Dr Rangan prescribes passion and friendship](#)

[Student Wellbeing and Inclusivity team](#): 01509 228338

studentwellbeing@lboro.ac.uk

To book an appointment with any of our services within Student Wellbeing and Inclusivity (including the Counselling Team, Mental Health Support Team and the Wellbeing Advisers), please complete [the referral form](#).