

Anxiety and negative thinking can make it hard to concentrate on your work and you may find that you are overly worrying about how you will do in your exam(s). Typical thoughts may be 'I'll fail' 'I'll never have enough time'

### Ask yourself:

- \* Have I confused a thought with a fact?
- \* What would I tell a friend if he/she had the same thought?
- \* What is the worst that could happen?
- \* If it did happen, what can I do to cope with it?
- \* Am I confusing "possibility" with "certainty"? It may be possible, but is it likely?



### Stress Relievers

Have a listen to our audio clips:  
(you need to sign in and search for stress)

[mmutube.mmu.ac.uk/home](http://mmutube.mmu.ac.uk/home)

Try these apps: [Headspace](#), [SAM](#), [Calm](#)

Look at Mindfulness for Students

[www.mindfulnessforstudents.co.uk/](http://www.mindfulnessforstudents.co.uk/)

Try these booklets:

[www.ntw.nhs.uk/pic/selfhelp/](http://www.ntw.nhs.uk/pic/selfhelp/)

There are lots more self-help ideas on  
our website and look at our workshops

<http://www2.mmu.ac.uk/counselling/>

Thanks to Student Minds and  
Dawn Hamilton for some of  
the wording used here.

# Stressed About Exams?



- ♦ Take a break
- ♦ Breathe out, slowly and a little longer than usual, as if you were trying to move a feather on the other side of the room.
- ♦ Get some fresh air, walk briskly for 10 minutes.
- ♦ Put on some music and sing along.
- ♦ Stretch your limbs, roll your shoulders.
- ♦ Remind yourself, you got on this course, you can do it!
- ♦ Download one of the podcasts on the back page, put in your headphones and focus.
- ♦ Congratulate yourself for getting this far!
- ♦ Now read this booklet

Some suggestions from

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Exams are an integral part of our studies. Working towards exams can feel like a lot of pressure and we may place a lot of importance on doing well. While we don't have much choice about whether we have to take them, we do have a choice in how we manage any stress we may be feeling.

- ◆ Take regular breaks. Research shows that we can concentrate well for approximately 45 minutes.
- ◆ Eat well. Treat yourself well, eat fresh fruit and vegetables. Eat slow release foods to sustain energy such as bread, rice, pasta etc.
- ◆ Make sure you hydrate regularly. Water aids brain function!
- ◆ Sleep well. Wind down 1 hr before bed and do something relaxing.
- ◆ Build exercise into your schedule. It's a proven stress reliever.
- ◆ Find ways to relax that suit you.
- ◆ Make sure you talk to friends/family especially if you're feeling stressed/under pressure. This can help to balance your thinking and put things into perspective.

*When your mind is running away, into thinking, bring it back to the present.*

Focus on the feeling and weight of your feet on the floor. What can you feel with your hands? Perhaps you can feel the pen, the table, the fabric of your clothes. Bring attention to your surroundings. In your mind's eye, describe the room you are in.

This helps to ground you and bring you back to the task in front of you.

## Breathe

- ◆ Breathe out, slowly.
- ◆ When you breathe in again, try and match the slowness of the out breath.
- ◆ It can help to count to 3 or 4 to help keep the breath a little slower.
- ◆ Continue for 1 minute.
- ◆ Imagine there is a large jar in front of you. Imagine putting all the frustrations and worries into the jar—you can look at them later.
- ◆ Now focus on the exam/revision ahead.

### Believe in yourself

You wouldn't have a place on the course if you didn't have the ability to do it. Aim to do your best but recognise that none of us can be perfect all of the time.

### Take steps to overcome problems

If you find you don't understand some of your course material, take action to address the problem directly by seeing your course tutor or getting help from your class mates.

Don't keep things bottled up

## Cut It Out!

Don't set yourself unrealistic goals- this will only add to the stress when you can't achieve them!

Stop comparing yourself to others. Stick to your own timetable/ approach to revision.

Try not to go over and over the questions after exams. Let it go and move on to the next one.

Try to cut down/avoid stimulants. Caffeine and alcohol impact on energy and concentration and can also interfere with much needed sleep.