

PREPARING FOR EXAMS:

It's exam time. You've studied hard and, naturally, you want to do well. Our top 8 revision tips can help you stay calm and focused during your exams.

1. Start early

Starting your revision early means you can spread it out and avoid last-minute panic. Aim to start revising in the mornings when your brain is fresher. Sometimes, revising later is unavoidable, but try to limit late night sessions. You can't revise successfully in a rush, so avoid last-minute cramming during all-nighters in your room. But if you have left it to the last minute, try to focus on the subjects you think will come up on the exam.

Once you know what to revise for the exam, make a revision timetable to plan your sessions using a digital or paper diary. Avoid the temptation to jump straight into your revision without one. Making a plan does take time, but it will save you hours of figuring out what to revise each day. Block out time for socialising, exercising and other breaks. Stick to your timetable as best as you can.

2. Find out the exam format

Make sure you understand the exam format and scope so you know what to revise. Look over your notes and decide your approach. For essay-based exams, you probably need to cover the content in more detail. Short answer-based exams need a broader, maybe less detailed revision.

3. Find a revision method that works for you

Revision techniques include flash cards, past papers, mind maps, group work and recording yourself talking then playing it back. Finding what works for you involves trial and error. Bear in mind that what works well for one exam might not work for another. Starting your revision early gives you time to find out the best revision methods for you.

4. Test yourself

Time spent testing yourself pays off, so come up with questions to test your knowledge. Make sure you understand what you're revising by thinking it through, rather than learning by mechanical repetition. Ask your friends and family to test you too.

5. Teach someone else

Explaining what you've learned to someone else is a great way to be sure you understand the topic. It will also help you remember information and identify any areas you don't fully understand.

6. Space out your revision and take breaks

Memorising information takes time – you can't cram it all in at the eleventh hour and expect it to stay there. Give yourself the best chance of success by staggering your revision – five hours of revision over five days is better than five hours in one day.

Stepping away from your revision for a short period of time helps your brain process and cement information, and improves your ability to remember it. Do some stretching, go for a walk, have a cup of tea – whatever gets you away from your study space for a little while.

7. Look after yourself

Make sure you sleep and eat well, get some exercise and reward yourself.

- **Get a good night's sleep.** A good night's sleep means your brain functions properly and can recall information. Sleep well to keep your brain healthy and to remember what you've revised. Getting to sleep at a reasonable time means you'll wake up earlier and fit in more revision during the day.
- **Eat well.** You might be tempted to save time when revising by surviving on quick food. Eating junk food and guzzling coffee may be time efficient but it won't result in effective revision. Eating a healthy, balanced diet and drinking lots of water will leave you feeling more energetic and focused.
- **Move your body.** Exercise gets the blood flowing and sends more oxygen to your brain so it'll function better. Anything to get your brain working well will help you during revision and exams. Exercise is also a nice break from studying. Win-win.
- **Reward yourself.** A reward at the end of a long day of revision is something you can look forward to while you're hitting the books. It could be anything from an episode of your favourite TV show to a phone call with a friend. Set a time to reward yourself, and don't stop revising until then. You could also plan a big reward for when exams are over.

8. Stay calm and positive

Maybe the most important thing to remember during the revision process is to stay calm and positive. Had a bad day? Try not to let it affect how you revise the next day. While exams are important, they're not the be all and end all of your education. Try not to stress too much about them.

There's no perfect formula for exam success, and you might find only some of our tips are right for you. The key is to work out how you revise most effectively and stick to that as best you can. Ultimately, when it comes to revision, you get out what you put in.