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## Quick Stress Busters

Here are some stress busting techniques that we use to stay sane during revision.

- A hot bath at the end of a long day.

- Meditation and breathing exercises. They help clear the mind and relax the body. Look for your University counselling website, or other online resources for some simple and effective relaxation exercises.

- Schedule time to get out of the house/wherever you revise. Go for a run or to an exercise class, have a coffee break with a friend or watch your favourite TV show. You won't feel guilty when it's scheduled into your day.

- Do something every day that relaxes you - read a book, meditate, play some football, etc.

- Eat well! Skipping meals and eating lots of sugary snacks are not good for concentration. Try to eat healthier food and stay hydrated to improve brain function.

<http://www.bbcgoodfood.com/howto/guide/eating-exams>

- Don't skip the sleep! How can you expect your brain to work at its best when it's tired?

- Keep your study and relaxation space separate - it helps you to stop thinking about work when you are trying to chill out.

- The "Headspace" app gives some great Mindfulness exercises for relaxing, recommended by the NHS for improving mental wellbeing.

- Don't be afraid to try Mindfulness and meditation. You might be surprised at how well it works.

- Don't work right up until you go to bed, or your mind will keep thinking of work.



KEEP  
CALM  
AND  
CONQUER  
VET SCHOOL

Feel like exams are always just around the corner? Or just like being a vet student is too pressured? Liverpool Peer Support has some advice and tips to help vet students at all universities beat the stress and keep calm.

## So What Can You Do?

It's important to be to recognize the signs of stress - exhaustion, loss of appetite (or increased appetite!), headaches, crying, sleeplessness or oversleeping, and feeling anxious, frustrated or apathetic are all symptoms. Some people try to escape through alcohol, drugs or other forms of compulsive behaviours, but these rarely work effectively or for long periods of time, so learning how to manage stress effectively is important. See our Quick Stress Busters for ideas.

If you feel that stress is affecting your studies remember there are always people to talk to; whether this is your Personal Tutor, peer support services or the counselling service, or even just a friend or family member. All contact you have with counselling services are confidential unless you are thought to be at risk, which is extremely rare. External Vet helplines such as Vet Life are also available, offering free advice to students and a confidential phone line if you want to talk through your worries with a professional. Just visit the link below:

**<http://www.vetlife.org.uk/students-help-advice-and-support>**

Loads of options and suggestions on how to deal with stress and anxiety are available over the internet or through the counselling service.

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## Our Favourite Study Tips

*- Spend some time finding out what revision technique works best for you at the start - do you work best with pictures, posters, flashcards, speaking to the cat?*

*- Pace yourself. Remember that breaks are important to keep your productivity levels up.*

*- Make a timetable, prioritising the most important things to learn and including breaks. It feels so good to cross sessions off of it and lets you keep track of how you're doing.*

*- Sometimes you literally can't revise everything, and that's ok.*

*- Reward yourself when you hit a target. Chocolate works well!*

*- Change your study location from time to time so that you don't stagnate. And don't revise in your bedroom - it can make it hard to switch off when you're trying to sleep.*

*- Don't change your routine the night before an exam - it can make it harder for you to relax and sleep.*

*- 45 minute revision sessions have been proven to be most effective - why not give it a try?*

*- Try not to listen to how much work other people are saying that they have done, they may well be exaggerating. You know what you need to know, and you need to work out how to revise best for you.*

*- Even if the exam doesn't go to plan, it is not the end of the world. Plenty of people have had re-sits and still go on to make great vets!*

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## Before Exams

- It may be tempting to try to keep working even when you're tired or losing focus. However, this may cause more harm than good - your brain won't continue taking information in, causing frustration and heightening any stress that you are feeling.

It's a good idea to reward yourself for studying with regular breaks - it gives your brain a chance to process the work that you've done and get ready for the next round. It's been shown that working for about 45 minutes at a time, followed by a 15 minute break, maximises productivity because your brain has time to process what it has just learnt without being overloaded.

- Make sure that you know the dates and times of your exams well in advance - this means that you can organise your revision based on which modules are examined first and stops you worrying last minute about when and where your exam is.
- Make sure you get enough sleep the night before an exam. It can be really tempting to stay up cramming, but you need some time to relax in the evening and a good night's sleep for your brain to function at its best the next day. When you're sleeping your brain is processing all that revision! Try doing some exercise or having a bath before you go to bed to relax and get rid of nervous energy.
- Check that you have everything you need the day before the exam. That way, if you're missing something, you have time to go and get it. Packing your water, pencil case, calculator, student card, etc. the night means that you can just grab your bag and go in the morning without worrying if you have everything ready.

## The Day of the Exam

- Make sure that you set your alarm to wake you up in plenty of time - the last thing you want is to be rushing around because you got up late, or even risk missing the exam. In fact, why not set several alarms, just in case you doze off after the first one.
- Eating breakfast and staying hydrated are important to help your brain function at its best. So remember to eat something, even if you don't feel hungry; and take a bottle of water into the exam. Studies have shown that students who take a water bottle into their exams perform better than their classmates.
- It's a good idea to avoid people who are negative before exams, even if they are your best friends. Anxiety can be contagious and the last thing you want to do is panic because other people are! At this point there is nothing more that you can do, and panicking will probably impair your performance.
- Remember that people react very differently before an exam - some revise until the last minute, some people sit by themselves, or listen to their Ipod, etc. Whatever you want to do to focus before an exam is up to you, do what is right for you!

**You are not alone.**

**Everyone feels stressed around exam time.**

**If you feel like you are struggling to manage your stress, please contact your University's counselling services, peer supporters, or Vetlife, where there will always be someone to help you through.**