



# STAY HEALTHY DURING EXAMS

## TIME MANAGEMENT

PLANNING YOUR TIME HELPS YOU THINK ABOUT IT STRATEGICALLY AND, EVEN IF YOU HAVE TO ADJUST YOUR STUDY PLANS, YOU WILL BENEFIT MORE FROM HAVING PREVIOUSLY DEFINED YOUR TASKS AND ACTIVITIES.

A TIME MANAGEMENT PLAN INCLUDES ALL THE ACTIVITIES THAT A PERSON PERFORMS IN A DAY, SUCH AS:

**COMMITMENTS:** CLASSES, WORK, FAMILY TIME, SPORTS, GYM, COMMITTEES (INCLUDING TRAVEL TIME)

**PERSONAL TIME:** GROOMING/HYGIENE, RELAXING, WATCHING TV, LISTENING TO MUSIC, SHOPPING, SOCIALIZING, EMAILING, PHONE CALLS, AND SO ON

**ESSENTIAL TIME:** EATING, SLEEPING

**HOUSEWORK:** MEAL PREPARATION, HOUSE CLEANING, WASHING DISHES, DOING LAUNDRY, AND SO ON

PLAN BEFOREHAND YOUR DAILY LIST OF SUBJECTS OR CHAPTERS THAT YOU WILL TAKE UP. ONE WAY TO DO THIS IS TO WRITE A 'TO-DO' LIST.

PRIORITIZE YOUR SUBJECTS OR CHAPTERS ACCORDING TO THE ABC APPROACH, THIS HELPS YOU TO WORK OUT WHAT SHOULD BE DONE FIRST. BREAKING UP LARGE TASKS INTO SMALLER ONES MAKES IT EASIER TO FINISH, AS DOES BEING SPECIFIC IN YOUR TASK DETAILS.



## EXERCISE

EXERCISE RELEASES ENDORPHINS THAT MAKE YOU FEEL GOOD, REDUCING STRESS AND HELPS YOU TO GET GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP

PHYSICAL EXERCISE RELEASES PROTEINS IN THE BRAIN THAT CAN ACTUALLY HELP IMPROVE YOUR MEMORY AND INCREASE YOUR COGNITIVE PERFORMANCE.

LOW-INTENSITY EXERCISE CAN GIVE OUR ENERGY LEVELS A MUCH-NEEDED BOOST, WHICH IS PERFECT FOR WHEN YOU'RE STUDYING LONG HOURS. STUDIES ALSO PROVE THAT EXERCISE BOOSTS CREATIVITY AND MENTAL ENERGY.

JUST 20 MINUTES OF EXERCISE BEFORE STUDYING CAN IMPROVE YOUR CONCENTRATION AND HELP YOU FOCUS YOUR LEARNING.

IF YOU'RE FEELING OVERWHELMED, SOME REGULAR EXERCISE WILL KEEP STRESS AT BAY AND WILL HELP YOU TO MAINTAIN A POSITIVE MIND-SET.



## SLEEP

Establish a relaxing bedtime routine. Try a warm shower, a nice mug of tea, good book or a relaxing podcast.



Set time to sleep. Don't force yourself to study beyond your sleep schedule. Remove all distractions and unwind for bed.

Keep a notebook near your bed. We often remember things as soon as we lay down. When this happens, write everything out, and decide to confront it in the morning.

Your mind and body needs rest after a long day of learning. If you don't get good sleep, you will struggle to function the next day and be unable to take in information effectively. Exercise a little before bed, listen to some relaxing music, practice some deep breathing to help unwind.

## HEALTHY MEALS

The food you put in your body has a huge impact on how your brain works. IF YOUR BRAIN ISN'T PROPERLY FUELLED, YOU'RE LIKELY TO FEEL SAD AND IRRITABLE. YOU MIGHT ALSO HAVE TROUBLE SLEEPING, POOR MEMORY, AND DIFFICULTY PROBLEM-SOLVING.

HEALTHY SNACKING AND SMALL FREQUENT MEALS WILL MAINTAIN YOUR BLOOD SUGAR AT A MORE CONSISTENT LEVEL WHICH IMPROVES PRODUCTIVITY.



HAVE A HEALTHY WHOLESOME MEAL THE NIGHT BEFORE THE EXAM. AVOID CAFFIENE, CAFFINATED DRINKS OR ALCOHOL BEFORE BED.

Put reminders and alarms on your phone so you don't stay hungry for too long.

Healthy brain food for studying:  
Leafy greens, vegetables and fruits  
Omega 3 and protein  
whole grains

Avoid the temptation of skipping meals or overeating when you have exams.

CRAMMING IN LOTS OF CAFFEINE, SUGAR AND JUNK FOOD, FOR A QUICK-FIX CAN COLLECTIVELY LEAD TO HEART PALPITATIONS, DEHYDRATION, INSOMNIA AND HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE.

## MANAGE STRESS

EXAMS COME AROUND TWICE A YEAR, EVERY YEAR. WHILE THAT IS STRESSFUL IN MANY WAYS, IT'S ALSO PREDICTABLE. THIS MEANS THAT YOU CAN PLAN AHEAD TO MANAGE STRESS AND ANXIETY.

PLAN AHEAD: GET UP TO DATE ON ALL YOUR STUDY MATERIALS THAT YOU NEED. TRY DIFFERENT STUDY METHODS. CREATE A PLAN LIKE AN EXAM SCHEDULE. SETTING ACHIEVABLE GOALS MAKES YOUR PLAN MORE REALISTIC. DON'T FORGET TO BE SPECIFIC.

IT'S NOT REALISTIC TO AVOID SOCIAL MEDIA COMPLETELY, BUT LIMIT THE AMOUNT OF TIME YOU SPEND ON IT, AND DON'T ENGAGE WITH THREADS THAT LEAVE YOU FEELING MORE STRESSED.



TRY MEETING UP WITH PEOPLE WHOM YOU CARE ABOUT, WHETHER IT IS A CALL OR FACE TO FACE. SOMETIMES STUDYING IN A GROUP HELPS TOO.

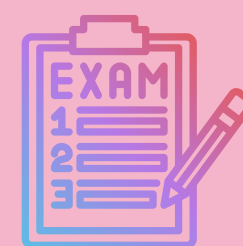
TAKE REGULAR BREAKS! KEEP BREAKS AT A REASONABLE TIME LIKE 15 MINUTES. YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO CONCENTRATE WITHOUT DOWN TIME.

TRY FIT IN SOME RELAXATION SUCH AS MINDFULNESS, RELAXATION EXERCISES, SPENDING TIME IN NATURE OR BREATHING EXERCISES.

REMEMBER THAT SOME EXAM STRESS IS INEVITABLE, AND EVEN HEALTHY AT TIMES. JUST REMEMBER TO FIND A GOOD BALANCE FOR YOU.

## PANIC DURING EXAM

IF YOU PANIC DURING AN EXAM YOU MAY FEEL THE FOLLOWING



FEELING DIZZY, SHAKY OR FAINT  
FEELING SICK  
RAPID BREATHING  
A DRY MOUTH  
SWEATING A LOT  
A RAPID HEARTBEAT  
FEELING HOT OR COLD



GIVE YOURSELF TIME TO LET THE PANIC PASS. IT'S MUCH BETTER TO TAKE A FEW MINUTES TO CALM DOWN THAN TO TRY TO PRESS ON WITH THE EXAM WHILE YOU'RE STILL PANICKING.  
REMINDE YOURSELF THAT WHAT IS HAPPENING IS JUST A RESPONSE TO STRESS, THAT IT WON'T HARM YOU, AND THAT IT WILL GO AWAY SOON.

TELL THE INVIGILATOR IF THERE IS A PROBLEM, SUCH AS DISTRACTING NOISES, THAT IS CAUSING YOU TO WORRY.

REMEMBER, YOU'RE NOT TRYING TO GET RID OF YOUR PANIC, BECAUSE IT WILL GO AWAY ON ITS OWN: YOU'RE JUST TRYING TO MAKE YOURSELF MORE COMFORTABLE IN THE MEANTIME.

FOCUS ON YOUR BREATHING: TRY TO BREATHE SLOWLY AND DEEPLY THROUGH YOUR NOSE, AND BREATHE OUT FOR AS LONG AS YOU BREATHE IN.

GIVE YOURSELF SOMETHING TO CONCENTRATE ON OTHER THAN THE EXAM AND THE WORRY ITSELF. FOR EXAMPLE, YOU COULD DOODLE ON YOUR NOTE PAPER, OR COUNT BACKWARDS FROM 100.

Don't forget to reach out to **Student Wellness Service** if you need support. We are here to help you.

[www.uct.ac.za/dsa/student-wellness-service/welcome-student-wellness-service-sws](http://www.uct.ac.za/dsa/student-wellness-service/welcome-student-wellness-service-sws)