

HOW TO ACE YOUR EXAMS

You're weekly guide to help you achieve your potential



Stress busting exam advice



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THE exam start date is now visible on your calendar and you are stuck indoors hitting the books while the sun is shining outside. With the weather improving and the start date approaching, you can hear your teachers and parents speaking increasingly about the exams, as if you didn't know they were looming. Increased exam discussion may cause you to feel more anxious or pressurised. You need to have some strategies ready, to help you cope with feeling overwhelmed. Here are some useful ways to keep that stress at bay:

1. Believe in you: Before you sit any exams, you need to instil some belief in yourself. You can begin this process by making some simple changes, like the way you speak for starters. For example: Instead of saying "I don't think I can do this", use language like "What do I have to do to achieve this?". Instead of "I'm not good at this", use "I can get good at this through practice" and instead of "I can't do this topic, it's too hard", use "What do I have to do to get better at this topic?"

This positive can-do language reflects your potential to achieve great things. Positive Mind, Positive Vibes, Positive Life, Positive Results. After all those classes, without even realising it, you have learned so much from your teachers. Never doubt yourself. Take each day of the exams as they come, focusing on

the next upcoming exam.

"Tired of trying to cram her sparkly star-shaped self into society's square holes, she chose to embrace her ridiculous awesomeness and shine like the supernova she is"

2. Take action: If there is course material you are having difficulty with; getting stressed won't help. Instead, I would encourage you to take action by seeing your teacher after class or even by asking class mates to help you understand the issues. Setting short term goals and acting on them is a great way of taking pressure off.

Ticking off the most important items on a list and working your way downwards can work wonders. Always note down what you have done at the end of the day, not the work you didn't complete. Taking action will help you feel way better than not doing so. Keep making decisions to order to progress forward.

3. Keep in touch with friends: Confiding in someone you trust that listens and will be supportive of you is a great way to help reduce stress and worry. Talking to a friend, relative or parent about study worries can greatly lighten the load. Often what seems like an overwhelming problem can be manageable when you talk it through with someone else.

Your class mates are in the same boat as you and know how you are feeling; so you should help each other get through any issues. Support your friends and the sentiment is sure to be returned. Meeting up with friends who are not doing

exams can also help to take your mind off things too.

Stay positive, talk, express yourself and keep in touch with those who are important to you.

4. Don't be too hard on yourself:

It is important to understand that in any situation you can only do your best. Try not to be too hard on yourself or compare yourself to your classmates. Ask yourself questions like... Why do I need this grade? Do I need a minimum grade to get into a course? Am I just putting unnecessary pressure on myself? Or am I doing this for my parents?

Be kind to yourself during this testing time, remembering that exams will not determine the rest of your life and most adults have changed career path two or three times on average.

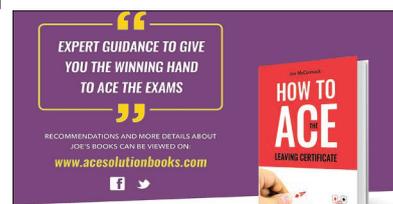
There are so many different avenues you can follow now, unlike previously, when there was only one direct route into a career. Do some research to see if there are other indirect ways into your chosen field and inevitably, there will be. The name of the game is to have a few options at your disposal in order to keep the stress levels down.

"Worry is like a rocking chair; it gives you something to do but never gets you anywhere" - Erma Bombeck.

The best stress busting advice I can give you is to listen carefully in class, do your homework to the best of your ability, spend time and have fun with your friends and keep up that leisure activity you enjoy doing.

The combination of keeping these four balls in the air will help you build resilience for the upcoming exam papers.

Joe McCormack has taught Maths, Geography, ICT, Technical Graphics, CPSE, Woodwork and Science in various secondary schools in Ireland for the last fifteen years. In addition to correcting exams for the Dept of Education and Skills and Dublin Examining Board he has worked in Ireland's top school for tuition, the Dublin School of Grinds. Through his experience and research, Joe has gained a unique understanding of the struggles and obstacles students face when it comes to Junior and Leaving Cert exams.
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- Childcare/Special Needs Assistant
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- Health Service Skills
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- Pre University Liberal Arts (English) *New
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- Pre-University Law
- Pre-University Business
- Human Resource Management *New

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- Animal Care
- Equine Business & Horsemanship *New

General Business

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- Airline Studies *New
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- Beauty Therapy
- Hairdressing

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- Professional Cookery
- Food Science

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- Sound Production

The Arts

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- Art Portfolio

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