

| Before exams   | During exams   |
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| <p><b>Quiet</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● It may be helpful to have a quiet place to go before your exam</li> <li>● You might want to consider walking around a natural environment too, as this is shown to calm the mind</li> </ul>   | <p><b>Perspective</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● If you feel overwhelmed during the exam, keep the exam in perspective</li> <li>● You have done all that you can at this stage and try to keep in the moment of the exam, rather than trying to predict the end result</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>Music</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● It can also be beneficial to listen to slow, calming music before entering the exam</li> </ul>  | <p><b>Re-read the question</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Go back to the initial question and take a moment to re-read it slowly</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>Avoid cramming information</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Avoid last-minute cramming of information - Give yourself time to maintain calmness before entering the exam</li> </ul>  | <p><b>Helpful phrases</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Have a phrase in mind that can support you, e.g. 'I can do this, I can remain calm and confident'</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>A little bit of stress can help</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● You are highly likely to feel nervous and the 'butterflies' feeling in your stomach before your enter an exam - This is to be expected</li> <li>● A certain level of stress can help us to achieve well and shows that you care about the exam</li> </ul> | <p><b>Avoid comparing yourself to others</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Don't worry about what others are doing around you - This can make you feel more stressed if you compare yourself to where others are in the paper</li> <li>● If you need to look away from the paper for a moment, you could close your eyes and take a few deep breaths instead</li> </ul> |

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| <p><b>Sleep</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Get plenty of sleep the night before the exam</li> </ul>   | <p><b>Visualisation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Have an image that you can visualise if you become stressed - It could be what you will be doing after the exam is finished, or something that makes you feel really happy, or the main motivator for completing the exam</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Avoid certain food and drinks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Avoid drinking stimulant based drinks before the exam, e.g. energy drinks and coffee</li> <li>● Avoid foods with high levels of sugar, e.g. sweets</li> <li>● Great brain food and drink include, bananas, nuts, dried fruit and plenty of water</li> </ul>      | <p><b>Seating</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Be aware of how you are seated <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Are you hunched over?</li> <li>○ Are your hands clenched?</li> <li>○ Are your legs moving up and down continuously?</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Consider where you are holding tension in your body <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Keep your feet flat on the floor</li> <li>○ Relax your arms and hands</li> <li>○ Sit a little further back in your chair if you can, rather than hunching over the desk</li> </ul> </li> </ul>                       |
| <p><b>Slow, deep breaths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Take slow, deep breaths and imagine that you are breathing in warm, calming air and breathing out self-doubt (Practice this a number of times before the real exam)</li> <li>● Create a steady rhythm to help you maintain calmness - Inhale for 5, exhale for 5</li> </ul> | <p><b>Practice mindfulness</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● You can practice mindfulness exercises leading up to the exam to support better concentration and bring you back to the present moment - Examples... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Notice how the pencil or pen feels in your hand - Smooth? Rough? Does it balance easily?</li> <li>○ Think about your posture. How does the chair feel against your back?</li> <li>○ Consider the sounds around you. What subtle sounds can you hear in the room? What sounds can you hear outside?</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |

### After your exams

- Treat yourself! This might be something you like doing, a nice meal or your favourite drink. Don't spend time dwelling on the exam paper - You can't change your answers, but you can get ready for your next exam, learning from all the experiences of your previous one.

Your calming checklist *(Feel free to adapt this for your preferences)*

- Calming music playlist
- Quiet place to go before the exam starts
- Brain food (and drink!) - Banana, nuts, fruit, water
- Image to visualise during the exam if feeling under pressure
- Helpful phrase - 'I can do this, I can remain calm and confident'
- Inhale for 5, exhale for 5