

TOP TEN EXAM TIPS FOR STUDENTS

1 PLAN AHEAD

Whatever you do, don't leave revision to the last minute. Try to work to a timetable well before exams begin. Prepare a chart to monitor your progress.

2 START SMALL

Ten minutes is all it takes to get started on your revision, says George Turnbull, from examining board AQA. Don't get distracted and before you know it you'll be doing 40 minutes flat out.

3 MAKE IT EASY

Make your books and essays more user-friendly with summary notes, headings and revision cards. Study several subjects in an evening, in manageable chunks – starting with the one you like least.

4 GET OTHERS TO HELP

If you're having trouble remembering things, try teaching a friend or parent that subject. "It's a great way of learning it," says memory expert Tony Buzan. He also advises treating a subject like a jigsaw. "If you get to a difficult bit of a book put it to one side and move on. It'll be easier to cope with when you have more information to slot in."

5 FIND A ROUTE

Everyone's different so find what works for you – alone or with a friend, morning or late at night, short, sharp bursts or longer revision sessions.

6 USE A COMPUTER

It can be an excellent revision aid. Think of the internet as another library. Some people remember words on a screen better than in a book. There are lots of good revision sites.

7 TAKE BREAKS

One of the problems of being under stress is you don't ever really get to relax, so you feel continuously tired and don't sleep well. Take breaks to do things you enjoy. The most important way to relax is to exercise. It not only calms you down, it releases endorphins, the feel-good hormones, and increases blood flow, which helps you think more clearly.

8 SHARE YOUR PROBLEMS

Maggie Turner, who has supported her own four children through school and university exams, says: "Parents, friends, teachers or Childline are all there to help. Minimise stress by building up your self-confidence. After each revision session tell yourself, 'Well at least I know that bit'. Don't think about the possibility of failure."

9 PUT YOURSELF FIRST

Remember, it's vital to eat and sleep well. It's an important time for you – try to talk to your family about how they can make studying a little easier for you. Perhaps by agreeing times when you can have your own space, when they will try to be a little quieter around the house and when you'd rather not be disturbed.

10 DON'T PANIC

Don't cram all night before an exam. Poring over textbooks through the early hours can lead to a mental block and hamper your concentration. Have a good breakfast; it'll increase your brain power. If you are feeling anxious, breathe slowly and deeply while waiting for the exam to start. Ask the teacher or invigilator if anything seems unclear.