



■ Eat well, sleep well, take good care of your health and ensure you do a realistic evaluation of all the efforts you make to study for the exam.

ISTOCK

Exam stress taking a toll on you? Here's how you can beat it

SURVIVAL GUIDE



SAMIR PARIKH

Exam stress is the result of various factors. These include the focus on improving studying skills, as well as learning to cope with external factors associated with exams.

Exams don't necessarily need to be synonymous with stress and pressure. One of the basic necessities for all students to succeed in the examination system of today is to be equipped with certain study tactics to excel every exam without breaking into too much of a sweat.

Exams do not always have to imply last-minute mistakes. While it is essential for students to be empowered with the skills and strategies to inculcate effective studying practices, it is also necessary for them to be able to cope with the academic demands, along with the social, institutional as well as personal demands related to their studies.

1 Sleep well: Contrary to the popular saying, you need not burn the midnight lamp to study before an exam.

Instead, plan your studies well, and ensure that you get an adequate sleep, especially before the examination.

2 Adopt healthy lifestyle: The last thing you want during an examination is to fall ill. Therefore, it is important for you to avoid junk food, eat a healthy diet, and have plenty of physical activity instead of cooping yourself up inside your study room.

3 Avoid stimulants: It is a myth that caffeine, nicotine, or any other substance, can help improve your concentration during exams. On the contrary, they are likely to increase your anxiety levels, thereby making you feel more stressed.

4 Tips for before and after an exam: The morning of an exam is not the time to have frantic last minute revisions, which would only lead to confusion and stress. You should talk to your friends about everything but studies! After an exam, do not spend time mulling over the questions, exchanging notes with your peers, or calculating your estimated scores. If you feel you haven't done well, give yourself a break. Instead, it

makes more sense to let go of the by-gones, and focus on the next exam afresh.

5 Focus on your efforts: Remember to focus not on the final grades, but also to pay attention to the effort you put in to study. Even if the results do not seem to match up to your efforts, do keep in mind the influence of various external factors, and therefore make a realistic evaluation of your efforts.

6 Fight peer pressure: Competing with your peers might help motivate you at times. However, it is important to avoid making comparisons between your work and anyone else's. Instead, you should work towards fulfilling your own expectations from yourself.

7 An exam is not the end of your life: Exams are just a small part of your entire life span, which are not the only deciding factors of your life ahead. They are simply a stepping stone for you, and the success of your life does not depend on your performance in an exam.

The author is director, mental health and behavioural sciences, Fortis Healthcare