

Exam Survival Kit

relax^{*} Kids^{*}

This Exam Survival Kit will
help your child learn how
to beat exam stress and
achieve their full potential.

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Exam Survival Kit



Stress can negatively affect children's performance in tests. When children are nervous, it can cloud their focus, affect their memory recall and comprehension, and induce dreaded "brain-block"!

This Exam Survival Kit will help your child learn how to beat exam stress and achieve their full potential.

This guide offers a complete relaxation schedule for every day during exam time, with a before school exercise to help them prepare for their test, a 'Test Tip' to help them keep calm and focus, and an after-school exercise to help them unwind and get a good night's sleep.

This guide will help your child:

- Keep calm
- Concentrate
- Gain exam confidence
- Beat brain-block
- Achieve their full potential!



Day 1

Monday

Before school

On the day of your first Exam test you might be feeling a little nervous. Make sure that you get out of bed on time so that no extra stress is added from having to run around looking for your school bag!

Before you leave for school, give Mum or Dad a cuddle. Hugging releases a natural feel-good hormone called oxytocin. Oxytocin boosts self-esteem and helps reduce your stress levels, so a big hug can help you feel calm and confident before your first test!

(If you can't do this in the morning make sure you have an extra big cuddle the night before!)

Test tip – "Don't panic!"

Your first test can be a scary experience. Those few moments before your teacher tells you to turn over your paper and begin can seem to last an agonisingly long time. While waiting for your test to begin, don't panic...

Remember that you have worked hard and done everything you need to get you to this point. Spend a moment trying to relax and get yourself into a calm state of mind so that you will be able to do your best! Get comfortable at your desk, take a few deep breaths and do this simple exercise:

(you might want to practice at home first)

The Learning State

1. Familiarise yourself with the room in which you are in. Look around it and notice a few details - colours, shapes, objects.
2. Close your eyes and just relax. Try to empty your mind of everything for a few seconds. You know that you can pick it up later when you need it.
3. Now open your eyes and find a spot on the wall or in front just above eye level and direct your complete attention on that spot. Focus on the spot for around 5-10 seconds. Slowly, start to expand your vision so that you can see the things around the spot, but keeping your eyes very still.
4. Relax your jaw and continue to expand your vision. Become aware of the sounds in the room and notice how your body feels against the chair. Become aware of how your relaxed your body feels and how still your mind is.
5. Imagine stepping out of your body and being able to see the whole room. Stay in this relaxed state for a few moments until you are ready to begin.

This is called the 'Learning State'. Your awareness is heightened, your mind is relaxed and you are ready to recall all the learning you have memorised. Try and remain in this calm state throughout your test to help you achieve your best!

After school

Well done on completing your first test! The first one can be the most stressful, so it is important that you spend some time relaxing and resting your mind so that you can do well again tomorrow. Don't spend the whole night cramming!

You may want to spend a little time preparing for your next test. Calmly and confidently go over your revision, knowing that it is all there in your head and you are ready to do your best tomorrow.

Then put away your books and repeat this affirmation to yourself. Tip: You may want to look at yourself in a mirror as you say it.

"I know that I am wonderful. I am smart. I feel good about myself. I believe in myself. I believe in myself I believe in myself."

Day 2

Tuesday

Before School

Breathing exercises can help us get rid of stress and worry. It is impossible to feel stressed when you are focusing on your breathing!

Butterfly

Imagine there is a butterfly on your chest. Each time you breath in and out, the butterfly gently rises and falls again. Breathe in, breathe out, breathe in, breathe out.



Test Tip – "Keep calm"

You might feel a little less nervous today after doing so well yesterday. But you should still try and relax your body and mind and get rid of any worries you have so that you can focus and do your best. You might like to try getting into the Learning State like yesterday. Here is another simple relaxation exercise you can try:

Concentrate from Within

Concentrate on the beating of your heart. Do not pay any attention to anything else. Think how this great organ is pumping the blood to every part of the body. Realise how amazing your heart is and how it helps you do everything you need to do. Your heart is pumping blood and oxygen to your brain to help you be able to think clearly and concentrate. It is pumping blood into your arms and hands to help you be able to write. It is pumping blood into your legs and toes so that you can sit still and not fidget. Try to actually picture the blood leaving the great reservoir and going in one stream right down to the toes. Picture another going down the arms to the tips of the fingers. After a little practice you can actually feel the blood passing through your system.

If you feel nervous at any point during the test, you can stop for a moment and focus on the beating of your heart and nothing else. After a moment, you will feel calm again and be able to continue with your test.

After school

Phew! Tests can really take it out of you, can't they? Having an early night will mean that your mind and body are refreshed and ready for the next day.

Your bed should be a stress-free environment, so don't think about your test when you are in bed! It can be hard to forget about things when we are worried about them, but this simple exercise will help you clear your thoughts and fall asleep peacefully:

The Robot

Close your eyes, be very still and imagine that you are a robot. Your whole body is made of metal. The lights on your arms and legs and stomach are flashing brightly. The robot also makes all sorts of beeping and bleeping noises. It is a very noisy robot.

Now you are going to see if you can switch the robot off and make every part of your body completely still. Start with your right leg - bring all your attention to your right leg and turn off the switch. Your right leg becomes totally still.

Do the same to your left leg, switching off the switch and watching the bright lights on that leg turn off. Switch off the light on your stomach and make it very, very still inside. Now do the same to your arms, turning off the lights and letting your arms become very still and heavy.

Finally, turn off the switch in your head. Switch off your mouth, switch off your nose and eyes and finally switch off your eyes. You should feel very still now. See how still you can make your robot body. Don't forget that if you move anything, the lights will go back on - so stay as still as you can.



Day 3

Wednesday

Before school

Hopefully you are feeling nice and refreshed after your early night. Try and keep this feeling of calm. Breathe deeply and repeat this affirmation out loud:

"I am focussed. I can concentrate. I am still. I am quiet. I am focussed. I can concentrate. I am still. I am quiet."

Test tip – "Stay focused"

Before you start your test, you can repeat your affirmation to yourself in your head.

You are halfway through test week now and you have done so well! Your brain has worked very, very hard but you must try and keep focused. During the test, if your mind starts to wonder, you find you can't concentrate, or you get dreaded brain-block, a simple breathing exercise can help you clear your thoughts and regain focus. Rather than wasting lots of time panicking or stuck in a muddle, it is better to spend a few moments gathering your thoughts so that you are ready to continue with a clear head.

Calm Breathing

Breathe in deeply through your nose, and out slowly through your mouth. Breathe in, breathe out. Only think about the breath entering your body and leaving your body. Breathe in. Breathe out. In your head, as you breathe in say to yourself "I am calm". As you breathe out say, "I am focused". Repeat this a few more times until you feel calm and ready to continue with your test.



After School

Stress can affect our bodies and make all our muscles tense up and feel horrible. Try this fun stretching exercise and see how floppy and relaxed you feel afterwards!

Elastic Band

Close your eyes, be very still and imagine your body is a piece of elastic. Just relax to start with and enjoy being a floppy piece of elastic. Allow your legs to be floppy and relaxed, let your arms be floppy and relaxed, let your stomach be floppy and relaxed and finally, let your neck and head be floppy and relaxed.

Now very slowly imagine someone is very gently tugging your head and someone else is pulling your feet at the same time. And the elastic is becoming tighter. Your muscles are becoming more taut. Your whole body is getting longer and longer. Enjoy this wonderful stretching feeling as you are growing longer. Then... ping....let all the muscles in your body relax as the elastic band is released. Relax back to being a floppy bendy piece of elastic again. Enjoy this wonderful feeling of being totally relaxed and floppy.

Day 4

Thursday

Before School

You have learnt lots of relaxation activities that you can use whenever you need to feel calm or focus. It is also important to make sure that you feel confident and good about your abilities.

Pick a super power for the day. Is there something you feel you are lacking or would like to have more of? Do you want to be quicker? Better able to concentrate? Keep calm? Be creative? More confident? Whatever you need more of, that is your superpower for the day!

You can call on this super power whenever you need it and you will have an extra boost of exactly what you need.

You might like to choose a Star Card and keep it in your pocket to remind you of your super power.

Test tip

You are nearly at the finish line! Your final test is here and you have done so well all week. Did you know that positive thinking can actually help us be better at something? By feeling confident and believing that we can do something, it actually makes it easier for us to do it!

When we imagine ourselves succeeding, we get rid of any feelings of self-doubt that might hold us back. Many top athletes use positive visualisation to help them perform better.

Breathing Exercise

Take a deep breath, close your eyes and imagine yourself finishing your final test and knowing that you have done brilliantly! See yourself with your friends and family celebrating how well you have done. Try to see yourself in that place. See everything clearly and vividly. What do you see? What do you hear? How do you feel? Notice every detail. Imagine you are holding your test results in your hands and feeling proud of yourself and all you have achieved. How does the paper feel? Is it rough or smooth? How do you feel inside? Really try to imagine yourself there. Make all the colours brighter in your mind and the sounds clearer. Hold on to this happy feeling.

When you are ready, open your eyes and feel this happy feeling spreading throughout your body. Keep this positive feeling with you as you complete your final test.

After School

Hooray! You made it. All your hard work has paid off and you are ready to relax completely.

Try not to worry about how you have done on the test. Nothing you do now can change the outcome of the test and you know you have worked hard and done your best.

If you do find worries creeping up on you, try this simple exercise:

Worry balloon

Imagine you are blowing up a balloon. Take in a deep breath, and steadily and slowly blow up your huge balloon. Imagine you are blowing all of your worries into this balloon. See the balloon getting bigger, and bigger, and bigger until all your worries are completely gone. Now close your eyes and imagine the balloon floating into the air. As you stand there, feel yourself becoming very quiet and peaceful.

Additional tips:

Keep hydrated!

Drink plenty of water. Dehydration can cause headaches and mental foginess. You will be allowed to bring a clear bottle of water into your test with you.

Have a good breakfast!

Avoid sugary foods and refined carbohydrates like white bread! These might make your blood sugar levels spike and stop you from being able to concentrate properly. If your tests are in the afternoon make sure you bring a healthy snack to keep you full and energised.

Eat "brain food"

Certain foods have been proven to help your brain work more efficiently. For example, blueberries can help improve your memory. Add some to your breakfast cereal to help you remember all the hard work and revision you have done.

Take your time

Don't panic about the time limit. Make sure you fully understand what you are being asked to do in your test before you try and answer the question.

Don't be afraid to ask questions

If there is anything you are unsure of in your test, don't be afraid to ask your teacher for help. They are there to support you and there is no use struggling over something you are unsure of. Just keep calm and raise your hand.



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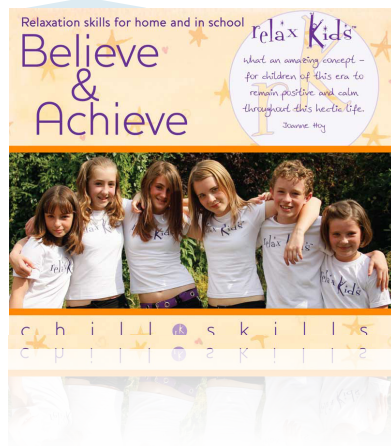
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