

# TIPS FOR EXAMS

As exams approach, some of you will be starting to feel rushed for time, anxious and worried about your preparation and performance. You may have had past experiences of forgetting what you know in an exam or feeling stressed and exhausted by the time your last exams roll around! Here are some tips to help you do the best you can:



[www.newcastle.edu.au](http://www.newcastle.edu.au)

## Before the exam:

- **timetable** the remaining days left to prepare, and for the exam period.
- Try to maintain your self care activities – exercise, eating regular healthy meals, time out with friends, meditation – whatever works for you.
- **Eat and drink** healthy food. Include fruit and vegetables and don't overload on caffeine, sugar, fats or alcohol. Drink lots of water as hydration affects brain function.
- Aim for 6-8 hours of **sleep** every night. Your brain and body need to rest and refresh to function well.
- Know the **location and time of your exam** beforehand and plan how to get there in plenty of time.
- **Avoid major life changes at this time** – don't give up or take up anything, for example smoking, drinking or caffeine. Don't move house, break up a relationship or fall in love until after the exams!
- **Review** summaries and do practice questions from past papers.

## The day of the exam:

- **Eat a good breakfast** including some protein and low GI carbs to provide energy. Eg. Muesli, fruit, multi – grain bread, egg.
- **Try not to compare notes** with others before the exam.
- **Notice your breathing** – slow it down if your breathing is fast or shallow.
- Notice any **self-defeating thoughts** you may have and allow yourself to imagine them floating away - remember they are not true, they are just thoughts.
- **Read the whole exam paper** and do the **easiest questions first**.
- **Allocate your time** according to value of the questions.
- **Avoid 'post mortems'** after the exam. Allow yourself some relaxation time to transition between exams.
- **Remember** to focus on your desired outcome than on any obstacles you can imagine.

## Where can I get help from others?

You can make an appointment with the University Counselling Service - it is free and confidential.

Phone: 02 492 15801

Email: [counselling@newcastle.edu.au](mailto:counselling@newcastle.edu.au)

Visit: Find us in the Hunter Building foyer near the Griffith Duncan Theatre

**If you 'go blank' or panic in the exam:**

- Stop and **focus on your breath**, following the breath into and out of the body, noticing the rise of the chest and other body sensations of breathing.
- Try **gently tapping or rubbing one of the following acupressure points**, which help reduce your anxiety:
  - just below the collarbone heads;
  - the chin (under the mouth);
  - the back of the head where the skull meets the neck.

The Counselling Service helps many students to manage exam anxiety. If you want to make an appointment with a counsellor please call 49215 801 or call into our office HA209, Hunter Building (opposite the Griffith Duncan theatre stairs).

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