

Changing Your 'Self-Talk'

Your self-talk is how you talk about yourself. Being aware of how you talk about your abilities to revise for and perform in exams will help you to starve your Exam Stress Gremlin and get your exam stress under control. Your exam- and revision-related



self-talk needs to be realistic and positive – just as your thoughts do. Have a go at answering the questions in the following Exam Stress Box to help you identify what your own self-talk is like and how you can change this for the better.

EXAM STRESS BOX

What words do you currently use when talking about your exam- and revision-related abilities?

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What effects does your self-talk have on you?

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How could you improve your self-talk?

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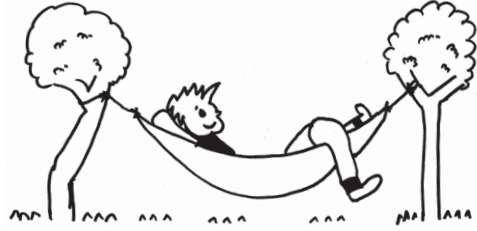
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Relaxing and Having Fun!

You can use simple relaxation and deep-breathing exercises to help you relax when you're feeling stressed about revision



and exams. These can also be helpful when you are trying to face exam- and revision-related situations that you would normally avoid, or when you want to stop procrastinating or reduce other self-defeating behaviours as discussed earlier in this chapter.

Have a go at the following relaxation and breathing exercises and see what you think. It's OK if these don't feel right to you, as they aren't always suitable for everybody. But give them a go and see how you get on.

DEEP BREATHING EXERCISE 1

Either sit down or lie down on your back. Focus on your breathing. Put one hand on your upper chest and one on your abdomen (just below your ribs). Gently breathe in and, as you do so, notice that your abdomen rises slowly under your hand. Slowly breathe out noticing how your abdomen falls down slowly. Repeat the process, breathing in and out with a slow, steady rhythm. You are breathing correctly if your hand on your abdomen moves up and down slowly but the hand on your chest remains still.

DEEP BREATHING EXERCISE 2

Lie on your back. Breathe in deeply and slowly, imagining that the breath is coming in through the soles of your feet, travelling up through your body and exiting through your head. Breathe in again and this time imagine that the breath is coming in through your head, travelling down through your body and out through the soles of your feet. Repeat this exercise several times and slowly.

RELAXATION EXERCISE 1

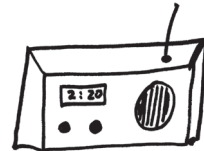
Close your eyes and imagine yourself somewhere peaceful, happy or enjoyable. Somewhere that makes you feel relaxed and happy. Focus on that image, start to build the detail and, for a short time, imagine that you are actually there. Breathe deeply and slowly as you do.

RELAXATION EXERCISE 2

Focus on one muscle in your body at a time, and slowly tighten and then relax the muscle.

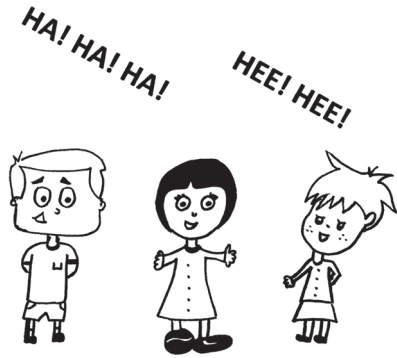
If the above activities aren't for you, you can always try other forms of activity or exercise that are aimed at relaxation, such as meditation, yoga and T'ai Chi. Alternatively, you can use activities that you enjoy to help you relax, such as:

- sports/exercise
- relaxing in a hot bath
- listening to or playing music
- watching TV
- spending time with friends or family
- volunteering
- reading
- going to the cinema
- other extra-curricular and leisure activities.



All the different types of activities mentioned in this section may also help to take your mind off the urge to perform self-defeating behaviours. In addition, they can be used as a reward when you

achieve tasks on your revision plan so that you have something to look forward to! They can also provide a well-deserved break from everything related to exams and revision – as that is vital! And some of them may give you a chance to laugh – an important method for de-stressing and starving your Exam Stress Gremlin!



Have a go at coming up with a list of fun activities that you believe may work for you and write them down in the next Exam Stress Box.

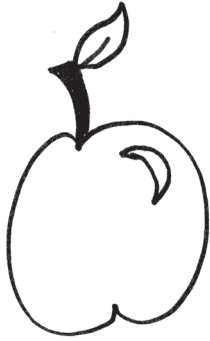
EXAM STRESS BOX

My fun activities

Living Healthily

It is important to:

Eat a healthy balanced diet,
have regular meals and
reduce your sugar intake



Drink plenty of water, as our brains
work better when properly hydrated.
Reduce the amount of stimulants you
drink like caffeine and sugary drinks



Exercise regularly, but not too
much, and do stretches to help
with the aches and pains of stress



Get enough quality sleep

