

## Matric Exam Stress

One of the biggest stressors for grade 12 students, besides deciding what to do after matric, is how to get through the matric final exams. This is a natural reaction to the daunting expectations placed on grade 12 students.

However the grade 12 year need not become a year of unbearable stress, depression and anxiety. If planning is well laid out for the year and dedication is adhered to studies, it can be the best year experienced of their school career.

### How to succeed in grade 12...

1. Make sure as a student that you have adequate knowledge of **good study skills**.



- a) Use study methods that work for you personally.
- b) Determine what material you need to know. Test your knowledge before working on a chapter and before making notes.
- c) Make notes!
- d) Use headings as questions, and try to answer them before reading through the content.
- e) Move onto the next question. Don't waste time. Time management is a crucial study skill.
- f) Recreate the exam environment when studying. No music or lying down on your bed. This helps prepare for the exam environment, and helps in reducing anxiety.
- g) Remember to study near fresh air, not a stale room.

2. Set up a **study time-table** as early as possible in the year.



- a) Draw up your study time table with a buddy.
- b) Working in a buddy system means that you will have someone going through the same work as you, at the same time. This way you can discuss issues as you study at the same pace.
- c) The buddy system also helps alleviate isolation and therefore anxiety.





3. Follow a **healthy routine**. This includes following

- a) A healthy diet that can fuel your brain. Your brain needs healthy food in order to function at its optimal level.
- b) Make sure to include Omega 3 in your diet. This helps fight anxiety by improving your emotional response to stress, and aids in memory. Omega 3 can be found in oily fish such as salmon, avo and linseed.
- c) Do not take stimulants to aid in staying up late. This is counter-productive and your memory will not be improved as fatigue will kick in and affect your ability to recall study material.
- d) Get enough sleep! If you don't get between 6 to 8 hours sleep, your brain cannot process the information you have worked so hard to learn.
- e) Exercise and take breaks. You need to stimulate oxygen to your body and mind in order to achieve the best results in memory processing. It also stimulates vital neurotransmitters that decrease anxiety and possible feelings of stress. Exercise also boosts your immune system.

4. Learn some **relaxation** techniques that you can apply when feeling stressed or nervous before exams.

- a) Use these techniques when taking study breaks so that they become a natural response to your stress response.
- b) Don't stop sports activities all together, as they are a great form of relaxation and to distract you from the pressure of studying.



5. **Organise** yourself before going into an exam



- a) Be on time. Set an alarm earlier to give yourself a little more time to emotionally prepare before an exam.
- b) Make sure you have everything you need for the exam on a checklist before you leave for the exam.
- c) Don't try studying new information just before the exam. This will become too confusing and will create unnecessary stress.



6. **Reward yourself** at milestones and for achieved results. You have worked hard and deserve to celebrate your accomplishments.



Ask for help! When you feeling overwhelmed or don't seem to understand study material, ask for help. Speak to your study buddy to try work out your block. Speak to a parent or teacher or counsellor when you feel emotionally overwhelmed. These crucial people in your life are your support system, and are there to help you through this year. If you don't feel comfortable speaking to someone you know find a help-line that you can call anonymously.

***Remember that an exam is there to test your knowledge and understanding. It is not a personal attack on you from your teachers.***