

Effective strategies

To help sixth form students cope with their workload and succeed

Preparing for exams—an effective strategy

You will be trying to remember about 800 pieces of information (if you are studying 3 A Levels). This takes a bit of organising – so much so that you could be called a Project Manager if you were in the workplace. You then have to balance this work with your other activities and a social life.

It can be a stressful time – we all feel stress in the build up to exams even if our expectations are different.

Many students will feel like they have systems in place to help them revise and cope—which is fine but it is never too late to try out new strategies.

Various suggestions and exercises to help cope with workload have been tried and tested with sixth form students as part of a research project over the last couple of years.

You might like to try some of these:

1 The Weekly Review

Spend 20 minutes at the end of the week recapping where you are in each subject.

- Read through your notes
- Highlight aspects of the work you don't completely understand
- List tasks that you need to do

The aim is to give you control and reassurance. This is snack learning rather than binge learning – you will remember more when you revise next time.

2 The Lead Domino method

You have a series of tasks to complete in each of your subjects or as part of your revision. There are one or two that are hanging over you that you are anxious about (maybe you are avoiding them) – DO THESE TASKS FIRST. The positive knock on effect will be all of the other tasks (or dominoes) will fall into place and appear easier.

3 The Ugly Frog Strategy



If you are forced to eat 2 frogs – eat the ugly one first. The second and last frog will then be more digestible.

In other words do the task you are dreading first – then the others become easier and a weight has been lifted from your mind.

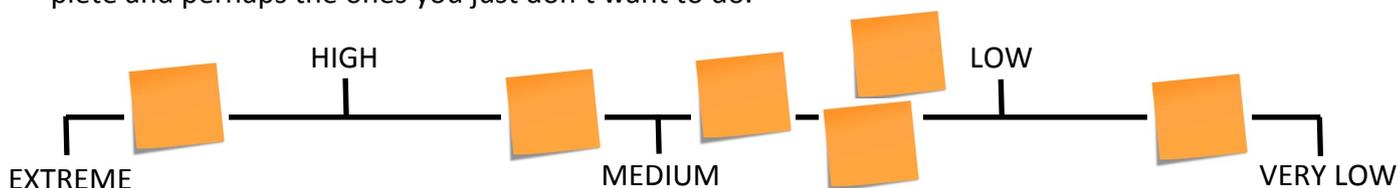


4 Ten minute rule

You just can't get started on some work or revision you need to do. Try the 10 minute trick—say to yourself that you'll just do 10 minutes on a particular topic, essay or exam question. Once you get started often 10 minutes turns into 20, 30 or more—and the jobs get done. Perhaps you also feel better and less anxious too.

5 Energy Line

Write out all of your things you need to do on to Post Its and stick them on the Energy Line. Tasks placed on the Extreme Energy part of the line are those that are going to be the hardest to complete and perhaps the ones you just don't want to do.



Use this to prioritise and do the Extreme Energy tasks first it will be a huge relief when they are completed and you will feel in control.

6 Eisenhower Matrix

President Eisenhower was President of the United States in the 1950s as well as serving as a general in the Second World War. He must have been extremely busy and stressed at times. He rationalised his situation as follows:

'I have two types of problems, the urgent and the important. The urgent are not important and the important are never urgent.'



	URGENT	NOT URGENT
IMPORTANT	Do these first	
NOT IMPORTANT		

7 Outdoor activity

Most people feel better after doing something out in the open air be it sport, climbing or just going for a walk. Spending a long time looking at a screen, be it laptop, phone or TV can make you feel very lethargic.

8 Have fun and try to get some sleep

Balance your work with having fun with friends. After a stint of revision or school work you deserve a break – reward yourself. More sleep is probably a good idea for all of us.

If you are concerned with how you are coping and would like some help or advice please call in to the POST 16 OFFICE.