

A guide to **MANAGING** **EXAM ANXIETY**

Developed as part of
ICMR's Multistate Implementation Research Study on Improving
Mental Well Being Among School and College Students



Let's talk about **EXAM ANXIETY**

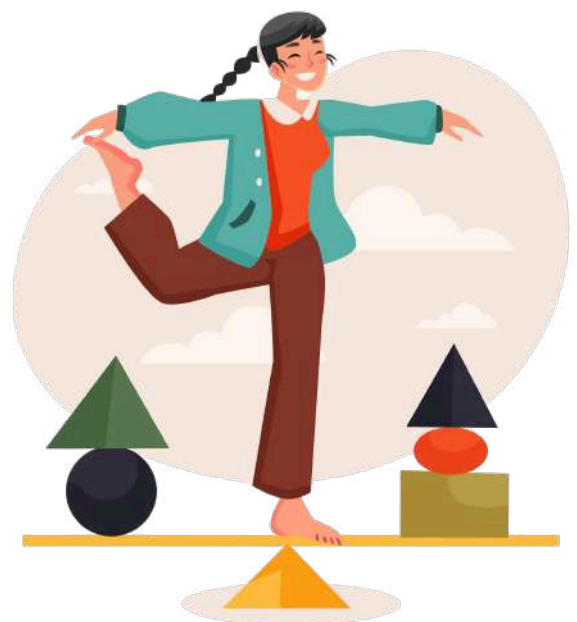
Student life is a dynamic and thrilling journey, brimming with chances to learn, explore, experiment, and grow! In this age, engaging in various social, academic, extracurricular and personal experiences contribute to a rich and rewarding experience.

However, finding balance can sometimes become crucial. During exam season, academics often take center stage, leaving little time for you to do the things you may enjoy like spending time with friends, watching your favorite shows or playing the games you like. It is a period when everyone aims to do their best!

What often accompanies these changes is rising levels of stress and anxiety.

While a manageable amount of stress and anxiety can keep us motivated and focused, excessive stress can be counterproductive.

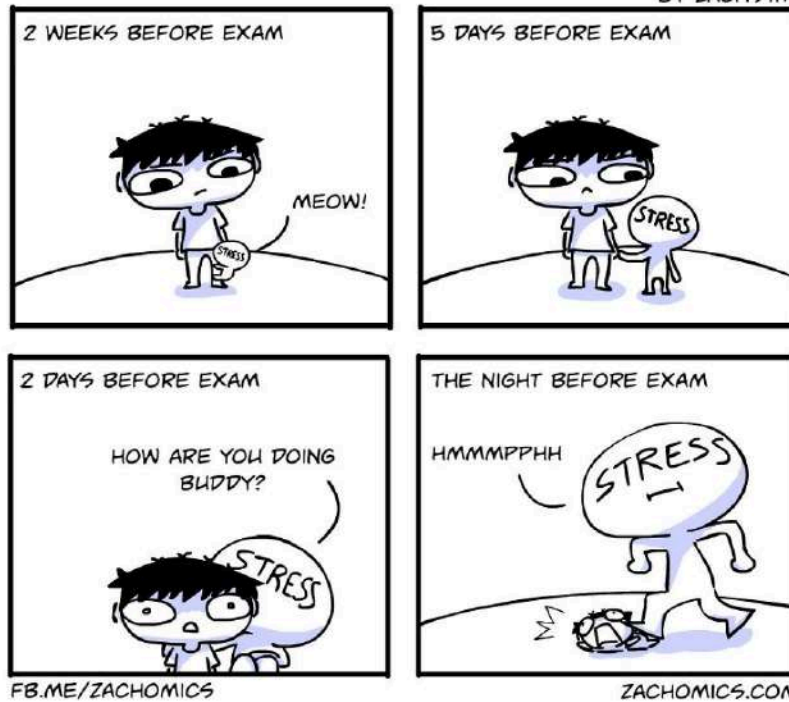
To manage stress effectively, it's important to first identify its sources.



Source: Freepik.com

STRESS BEFORE EXAM

BY ZACHSYM



What causes exam stress?

Exam time can seem stressful for everyone. But there could be other things that might add to your stress. These might be as follows:

- Feeling like you are **not ready or prepared** for an exam
- **Worrying** about how you will feel and perform during exams
- **Pressure** from others like parents and teachers
- **Setting unrealistic expectations** for yourself to score certain marks, often leading to feeling stressed
- **Comparing yourself** to others
- Having **difficulties at home** with family or **fights with close friends**
- **Fear of failure**

Preparing well is important, but there are other ways to make the exam experience less stressful.

Let us look at some simple tips to help you stay calm and manage anxiety during your exam.

Before Starting the Exam



Prepare the Night Before: Ensure everything you need (pens, pencils, calculator, ID, etc.) is packed the night before. This reduces last-minute stress.

Arrive Early: Getting to the exam venue early helps you settle in and mentally prepare for the task ahead.



Read Instructions Carefully: Before diving into the questions, take a minute to read the instructions thoroughly. This helps avoid any misunderstandings and sets you up for success.

Techniques for staying Calm and Focused

Deep Breathing for Anxiety: If you feel anxious, pause and take deep breaths. Inhale deeply through your nose, hold, and exhale slowly through your mouth. Repeat this until you feel more in control.



5-4-3-2-1 Grounding Technique: This technique helps shift your focus away from anxiety and back to the present moment. Here are the steps to engage in this technique:

- Focus on 5 things you can see,
- Notice 4 things you can touch,
- Listen to 3 things you can hear,
- Identify 2 things you can smell,
- Recognize 1 thing you can taste.



Source : Created by TISS

Muscle Relaxation: If you feel tension building, try clenching your fists or feet tightly for a few seconds, then release. This helps release built-up tension in your body.

Remind yourself of your preparation and abilities. Trust in your hard work!

After the Exam



Avoid Comparisons: Resist the urge to compare answers with your peers. This can create unnecessary stress.

Reward Yourself: Completing an exam is an achievement in itself! Treat yourself to something you enjoy, whether it's a snack, a short walk, or your favorite hobby.



Relax Before the Next Exam: Take some time to unwind before diving into studying for your next exam.



If the Exam Didn't Go Well:

Acknowledge Your Feelings: It's okay to feel upset or disappointed if the exam didn't go as planned. Accept these emotions instead of suppressing them.

Reflect on the Experience: Consider what you can learn from the experience. Were there areas you could improve, or strategies you could change?

Talk it Out: Sharing your feelings with someone you trust (a friend, family member, or teacher) can provide emotional support and perspective.

Focus on Your Strengths: Remember your achievements and strengths. Don't let one exam define your overall progress.

Set Achievable Goals: Break down your preparation for the next exam into small, manageable goals. This can help you regain focus and motivation.

Managing exam anxiety requires a mix of preparation, mindfulness, and self-compassion.

Remember, an exam is just one event in your academic journey, and you are capable of handling it successfully!



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