Exam Stress?
No Worries!

In the evening before a morning exam,

→ You don’t have to do any more revision at this point, but I know that some students can’t help themselves! Whatever you do, don’t try to learn anything new at this point. Only do minor revision tasks such as going over your notes.

→ If you have to revise, don’t revise right up until bedtime. Do something relaxing, such as listening to music or taking a bath, before you go to bed.

→ If you are going to be taking an oral exam, rehearse your entry into the exam room and your answers out loud, keeping your centering breath flowing calmly.

→ Take lots of breaks between tasks and do something ‘real’ such as watching the news. Remind yourself of how your exam fits into the wider context of your life, as it really is only a small part of your life as a whole.

→ Don’t eat or drink anything you know will upset your digestive system, some students find their digestive system tends to mirror the amount of pressure they are experiencing.

→ Get your clothes ready for the next day, if you have a choice, wear something loose and comfortable that makes you feel good.

→ Layer your clothes so you can adjust to the temperature of the exam room.

→ Have a reasonably early night and get a good night sleep.

→ Plan to arrive at the exam room the next morning so you only have about 15 minutes to wait before you go in. This way you can steer clear of anxious people fairly easily.

What to do...

In the morning before an afternoon exam,

→ Try to keep your morning free of stressful events.

→ Do some gentle exercise to keep your energy level up.

→ If you must revise, don’t try to learn anything new, but rather do smaller tasks.

→ Avoid coffee if you tend to get ‘caffeine shakes’

Now that your exams are almost here Sue Dorland, author of Exam Stress? No Worries! says it’s time to have a look at how you can prepare yourself when they actually arrive.
WHAT TO DO....

In the exam room,

→ Start your exam with a plan for your time distribution during the exam. Pace yourself to start each question at the time you have planned because spending more time on one question and therefore less on another can lose you marks.

→ Read the question paper slowly and carefully. If you misread a question you may panic.

→ Start with the question you feel most confident about if you want to boost your confidence. If one question is worth more marks you may want to start with that one, as energy levels are usually higher at the start of the exam.

→ If you get stuck on an essay-type question, rather than allowing yourself to get anxious, think about any summaries you have written on the topic, as these will help jog your memory.

→ If you get stuck on a multiple-choice answer, leave it and go on to the next.

Research shows that when students change answers on a multiple-choice paper they change wrong answers to right answers about twice as often as they change right answers to wrong answers.

→ If you are taking an oral exam, centre yourself while waiting outside the exam room.

Remember that the exam starts as soon as you walk in, so do whatever is appropriate with confidence. Use your posture, eye contact and smile to boost your confidence.

→ Remember that there is no reward for finishing first. Use all your time according to the timing you have set yourself.

→ Don't forget to give yourself a reward once the exam is over!

The world is round and the place which may seem like the end may also be the beginning – Ivy Baker Priest