



## Get Intimate With Stress

When examinations are near, your news feed is once again populated with messages like “10 more days to go!” or “Haven’t slept in 40 hours” and the check-ins are pretty much the same day in day out: school library.

Exams are one of the most pressurising and demanding chapters in life. During times like these, **you may feel overwhelmed** and your physical and emotional systems might get a little out of control. What you’re feeling inside is called ‘stress’. So what exactly is it? Let’s find out.

# Signs of stress

## Physical signs

- Frequent headaches or backaches
- Muscle tension
- Trouble sleeping at night
- Fall sick easily
- Loss of appetite

## Behavioural Signs

- Resort to aggressive behaviour (*e.g. hitting, bullying others*) to solve problems
- Lose interest in activities easily
- Stay away from friends
- Avoid tasks
- Easily distracted, careless or accident-prone
- Restless
- Nervous habits (*e.g. stammering or biting nails*)

## Mental Signs

- Trouble concentrating
- Forgetful
- Mental block
- Sensitive to criticism
- Lack self-confidence

## Emotional Signs

- Feel sad or depressed
- Easily angered or irritated
- Worry a lot
- Afraid of something
- Experiencing a sense of hopelessness

# What causes stress?

## Survival Stress

When your body feels threatened by something that may cause you harm, your body naturally responds with a burst of energy so that you will be able to survive the dangerous situation (fight) or escape it all together (flight).

## Internal Stress

Happens when you worry about things you can do nothing about or worry for no reason at all. Expectations that are high or unrealistic can also cause stress.

## Environmental Stress

This is when things around you cause stress, such as noise, crowding, and pressure from work or family.

## Fatigue and Overwork Stress

Such stress is caused by working too much or too hard at your job(s), school, or home. It can also be caused by not knowing how to manage your time well or how to take time out for rest and relaxation.

# What's bad stress and what's good stress?

## ✗ Bad Stress

- You get irritated and frustrated easily.
- You keep forgetting things and you're making more mistakes than usual.
- You lose your appetite and feel tired most of the time.
- You have difficulty sleeping well through the night.

*"Bad Stress is when you wake up screaming and you realise you haven't fallen asleep yet."*

- Unknown

## ✓ Good Stress

- You feel excited before a presentation or competition.
- You feel motivated to complete a task.
- You express interest in living life to the fullest, setting goals in life.
- You get that 'extra' energy to perform at your best.

### Stress in small amounts = Good stress

It can keep you on your toes, **ready to rise to a challenge.**

### Extreme or long term stress = Bad stress

It can wear your body down leaving you feeling depleted or overwhelmed, and even weaken your immune system.

# So how do you cope with bad stress?

## Plan Your Time & Activities



Create a **daily to-do list**



Keep a calendar to schedule not only your to-dos and also **time out for yourself**



**Divide up the tasks** that seem large or difficult to complete **into smaller sub-tasks**

Pick up more tips on how you can combat stress [here](#).