

# Coping with guilt about taking breaks

When you're studying for your subjects, you may put pressure on yourself without realising. This means that you may not give yourself enough breaks, or when you do, you feel guilty about it. This is especially common when revising/studying for an exam/test. However, here are some ways that you can calm your mind for when you do give yourself a break.

· Realise that it's actually better for your brain to take breaks:

If you study for hours consistently every day, without proper breaks, your brain is going to be overwhelmed with all of the information. Your brain is also not going to function as well and is going to take in less information. Therefore, even taking a 10-minute break every hour, will not only help your mental state but will also help your brain to absorb and take in information faster!

· Complete the work way before the deadline and create a schedule

Preparing ahead means that you have a ton of time to take breaks, if you want to, as you won't feel under pressure. If you're completing work the night before, it can be overwhelming and you may feel guilty for taking breaks as you have a limited amount of time. Therefore, creating a schedule can help you to stay on top of your work; you could even schedule in your breaks, if you want to be super organised! See the resource 'How to schedule/create a timetable' for more help on this.

· Remind yourself that you can only do your best

This seems like such an overused phrase but it's true! Trying to cram in information that your brain literally can't, is unnecessary. Everyone's brain works differently and we all have different capacities. Therefore, if you've taken a break, after working to your very best, then there is nothing wrong with that! Understand your limits and what you're capable of – listen to your body– if you're having headaches, take a break! Your body will thank you for it.

· Try not to compare yourself to others

When everyone is studying at the same time, it can be easy to compare yourself to others – you may feel guilty for taking a break when no one else does. However, you have to think about your own wellbeing. Some people are better at studying than others and can work for longer periods of time. However, if you can't, there is nothing wrong with that! People will take breaks whenever they feel like they need it. So, remind yourself that even though it's hard, it's not a competition and everyone will get the work done in their own way and in their own amount of time. If it helps, distance yourself from other people so you're not aware of how much time they've spent studying e.g., leave the library if you're constantly looking at other people.



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## · If it helps, set a timer

A really good way to stay on top of your work, as well as taking breaks effectively is the 'Pomodoro Method'. This is a famous productivity method where you take a 5-minute break, after every 25 minutes of work you've done. You can find the timers on YouTube, where a buzzer will go off to let you know that it's time for your break. Within the 5-minute break, you can do a stretch or do some breathing exercises etc. If you complete 4 rounds of the pomodoro timer straight after each other, make sure you then take a longer break (15-30 minutes). This method will help to reduce guilt because you're still working consistently but with a small gap in between – so you're not taking that much time out of your work schedule to have a break.



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