Making the Grade

10 essential things you need to know
to up your exam performance and cross that grade boundary

For more information
visit www.doctorwellgood.com
It’s all about Justice
Whether you’re doing GCSEs a Degree or A levels…
whether you’re a straight A student or you struggle a bit…
…whether you work your bits off or take a more chilled attitude to study…
…having got this far you might as well get every single mark you can…

...we’ll help you do yourself justice.

How to use this guide
We can’t guarantee you an A Grade or a 2:1 but the mini-posters and pages in this guide will help you do yourself JUSTICE

Print out the mini-posters and stick them on your wall, on the back of your door, on the fridge door or anywhere you’ll see them often enough to remember them.

It’s all about performance
Exams are one of those weird times when you need to put your everyday life on hold and focus on one thing – it’s a performance, it’s hard work, it’s tiring, it’s stressful.

No pain, no gain
It can also be rewarding – once you’ve got your grades nobody can ever take them away from you.

Remember exams are a means to an end
As you get older you realise that in the broader rich tapestry of life exams don’t really count for a lot.

However good grades now will open doors to opportunities for the next stage of your life – whatever exams you’re sitting.

Good luck!
Although they do say the harder you work the luckier you get!

If you get a chance to read through the other stuff, which tells you a bit more about the 10 Top Tips, that would be even better.
If you fail to prepare you must be prepared to fail.

1. Plan your time
2. Plan your revision
3. Plan your free time

THEN STICK TO IT!

(nobody ever said it would be easy but once you’ve got your grades nobody can ever take them away!)
**MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR REVISION IS ALL ABOUT TIME MANAGEMENT – MAKE A PLAN THEN STICK TO IT.**

Yes we know it’s boring – but it’s not often a few weeks of boring work can have such an impact on the rest of your life.
Work Out Your Learning Style

You can go online and it will make your revision more effective before you start to revise.

There are three learning styles: Visual, Auditory, Kinaesthetic.

For more information visit www.doctorwellgood.com
FIRST THINGS FIRST
WORK OUT YOUR LEARNING STYLE
BY USING AN ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE

THIS IS A GOOD ONE:
http://www.brainboxx.co.uk/a3_aspects/pages/vak_quest.html

Very few of us use only one learning style.
You might need to combine techniques.

Try out a few revision techniques to work out which one suits you best:

- Use flash cards
- Write key points on big pieces of paper then stick them around your room
- Work with friends and test each other
- Mind maps
- Write out essays from memory - then check how many points you’ve got

ADVICE FOR VISUAL LEARNERS
- Use pictures, charts, and maps
- Take notes or use handouts
- Use colour to highlight texts and notes
- Look carefully at headings and patterns of topics
- Brainstorm using illustrations, mind maps and models
- Use multi-media where possible
- Study away from visual disturbances
- Visualise information as a picture
- Skim-read to get an overview before reading in detail.

ADVICE FOR AUDITORY LEARNERS
- Participate in discussions and debates
- Use a voice recorder for making notes
- Read text aloud - listen to your own voice
- Create musical jingles and mnemonics to aid memory
- Discuss your ideas verbally with your mates
- Dictate to someone else while they write your ideas down.

ADVICE FOR KINAESTHETIC LEARNERS
- Take frequent study breaks
- Move around to learn new things (e.g. read while you are using an exercise bike; model in clay to learn a new concept)
- Stand up to work
- Use bright colours to highlight reading material and turn it into posters or models
- Skim-read before reading in detail.

Work with friends and test each other then check how many points you’ve got
Knowledge = everything in your memory

Memory = everything you’ve learnt and haven’t forgotten yet

We all forget things if we only learn them once

Try to learn everything 5 times so it sticks
FOR MOST PEOPLE, MOST OF THE TIME, AT MOST LEVELS, EXAMS ARE A MEMORY TEST
You'll be asked to remember facts
You'll be asked to remember formulas and processes
You'll be asked to remember techniques
THE MORE YOU REMEMBER THE MORE YOU WILL ‘KNOW’ THE MORE MARKS YOU WILL GET
THE BRAIN IS AN AMAZING THING WITH ENDLESS POTENTIAL TO MEMORISE A WHOLE HEAP OF STUFF
A HEALTHY BRAIN REMEMBERS BETTER
If you really want to get stuff into your long-term memory it’s best to learn it or over-learn (revise) it at least 5 times.

We all have 3 types of memory:

**Short-term memory**
that keeps things hanging around in your head for a few seconds – like a post it note on your computer.

**Long-term memory**
it’s like a big fat filing cabinet in the back of your brain where things get stored for ever. It’s the brain’s version of a hard drive.

**Working memory**
this is like the RAM on your computer. It holds ideas and things at the front of your head while you manipulate them and ‘work stuff out’ and answer questions.

The more you can get from your short-term memory into your long-term memory the more the working memory has to work with.

Develop your memory in line with your learning style
Use all of your senses to help your memory
- Try rhymes, chants and songs
- Associate facts with smells
- Pick vivid images that remind you of facts
- Develop a code to help you prioritise things

Keep it fit by exercising it
Play memory games

**Why not weave the facts into episodes into a story?**
It’s called creating an episodic memory

So read the sections of hydration, food and sleep!
1. Read the entire question

2. Understand the question

3. If you don't understand it, read it again

4. Answer the exact question

*If you still don't understand it, don't waste any more time, move on and come back later.
10 TOP TIPS TO HELP YOU GET 10/10

1. Sleep well the night before, eat a good breakfast (see sleep and food sections).

2. Turn up prepared, pens, watch, calculators, set text, bottle of water minimum stress.

3. Write down anything you crammed last night and might forget the moment you start the exam.

4. Read the instructions if you have a choice read the questions and choose the ones you plan to answer.

5. Plan your answers in outline – put down all the points you’ll include so you don’t forget them later (you’ll think of more as you go along).

6. Allocate your time to the questions, or bits of the questions, that will give you most marks.

7. If you can’t answer a question straight away move on and come back to it.

8. ...BUT try not to leave any question out – write something because if you leave it blank you’ve got no chance at a mark.

9. If time gets tight answer the question in note form or bullet point form.

10. Don’t leave the exam early unless you’re absolutely certain you can’t score another point by going over it.

- Work out where the marks are
- Fight for every one
- Follow the signposts
- Don’t give up
Remember:

2% dehydration = 30% drop in performance

Drink plenty
Drink often
Take fluids into exams

For more information:
visit http://doctorwellgood.com/clinic-a-z/dehydration.html

Beware:
Too much caffeine will dehydrate you
1. Stress costs marks
2. Don’t let the guys around you stress you out
3. Chill
4. Be Yourself


For more information visit www.doctorwellgood.com
ARRRRGH!
NOBODY EVER SAID IT WOULD BE EASY
DO YOURSELF A FAVOUR AND BE HONEST
Exams are tough. Anybody who says they are easy is either a genius or mad (or, who knows, possibly both?)

They expect you to do weird things:
- Sit in silence in a crowded room
- Concentrate like crazy for an hour or more
- Remember stuff you’ve spent days and weeks learning and regurgitate it in a few minutes onto paper

HEY – WHO WOULDN’T BE STRESSED?
WE’RE NOT TELLING YOU IT’S GOING TO BE EASY –
WE’RE TELLING YOU IT’S GOING TO BE WORTH IT!

For more information
visit www.doctorwellgood.com

STRESS
SPOT THE TELL-TALE SIGNS OF STRESS

Trouble sleeping
Irritability Trouble waking up
Anxiety Panic attacks
Loss of sex drive
Loss of appetite

CHILL OUT
- Take a break if it gets too much
- Stick to your plan and timetable
- Don’t forget to have ‘me’ time
- Exercise will help you relax
- Warm bath before bedtime – it works
- Stay away from the caffeine
- Sleep is better than stress

EXERCISE TICKS TWO BOXES
- it will lower your stress and
- improve your exam performance

RESEARCH SHOWS THAT
ONE OF THE BIGGEST CAUSES OF STRESS IS LISTENING TO YOUR MATES SAYING HOW WELL OR BADLY THEY’RE DOING...

...DON’T FORGET THEY’RE FINDING IT EVERY BIT AS TOUGH AS YOU

WHEN YOU GET STRESSED YOUR BRAIN GOES INTO SURVIVAL MODE, SHUTS DOWN ITS INTERNAL COMMUNICATION AND TELLS THE BODY TO RUN AWAY – NOT GOOD IN AN EXAM SITUATION

NOBODY WAS BORN TO REVISE THERE’S NO REVISION GENE BE REALISTIC

BE YOURSELF, DO YOURSELF JUSTICE

Heaps of studies show that people who are fit and do exercise perform better in exams than those who don’t.

For more information visit www.doctorwellgood.com

No one really knows why, but hey why not give it a go?

http://doctorwellgood.com/girls-magazine/girls-exercise.html
“If exercise were a pill, it would be one of the most cost-effective drugs ever invented”

HOW MUCH EXERCISE IS ENOUGH?
- You need to exercise hard enough to get out of breath
- 3 times a week for 1 hour is enough
- Or every day for 30 minutes

EXERCISE MAKES THE BRAIN RELEASE ‘FEEL GOOD’ HORMONES AND HELPS YOU RELAX AND CUT DOWN STRESS

WHAT CAN I DO?
- Skip
- Take the dog out
- Dig your mum’s garden
- Jog run
- Take a step class
- Climb the stairs
- Wii Play tennis
- Skate boarding
- Go dancing
- Roll blading
- Do extreme ironing
- Mow the lawn
- Power-walk
- Get on your bike
- Kick a ball around
- Juggling
- Vacuum the carpet
- Wash the car

For more information visit www.doctorwellgood.com

http://doctorwellgood.com/girls-magazine/girls-exercise.html
Sleep is food for the brain.

Lack of sleep leads to poor performance

Most students are sleep deprived

On exam nights you really need 9 hours

http://www.doctorwellgood.com/clinic-a-z/sleep.html

http://doctorwellgood.com/feature/sleep.html
10 WAYS SLEEP DEPRIVATION WILL COST YOU EXAM MARKS THIS SUMMER

1. **YOU'RE ALMOST CERTAINLY SLEEP DEPRIVED IF YOU DON'T GET AT LEAST 9 HOURS A NIGHT**

2. **SLEEP CYCLES CONSOLIDATE MEMORY AND HELP MAKE THE MOST OF ALL THAT REVISION TIME**

3. **RESEARCH SHOWS THAT ON AVERAGE A GRADE STUDENTS GET 15 MINUTES MORE SLEEP A NIGHT THAN B GRADE STUDENTS – PROOF THAT SLEEP MAKES A DIFFERENCE**

4. **LACK OF SLEEP ‘Dumbs You Down’ – You Don’t Perform or Respond As Quickly In Tests – Mental or Physical**

5. **LACK OF SLEEP SCREWS UP YOUR JUDGEMENT**

   Sleep deprivation accounts for the vast majority of ‘accidents’ in the world – quite simply whether you’re driving your car or sitting in the exam hall your judgement goes and you make mistakes.

6. **YOUR SECOND TIREEST TIME OF DAY WILL BE AFTER LUNCH – RIGHT BEFORE YOU SIT THAT AFTERNOON EXAM PAPER – SO WHY NOT TRY A 10 MINUTE POWER-NAP, THEY REALLY HELP**

7. **10.**

   For more information visit www.doctorwellgood.com

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**MELATONIN? IT'S ANOTHER FML THING**

Melatonin is THE substance produced in your brain that controls your sleep cycles. In your adolescent years the for some reason the brain produces melatonin later in the day than when you are a child, or an adult. That means you naturally want to go to bed later and get up later, making it almost impossible to get the 9.5 hours you really need to do your best if you fit into the exam system.

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**LACK OF SLEEP TAKES AWAY YOUR POWERS OF CONCENTRATION**

So adopt a lifestyle that helps you get into a healthy sleep pattern as early as possible.

EXERCISE,

MAKE SURE YOUR BEDROOM IS DARK,

STAY OFF THE CAFFEINE,

WARM BATH BEFORE BEDTIME,

WATCH A MOVIE TO SLOW YOUR BRAIN DOWN, EMBRACE SLEEP AND REAP THE BENEFITS IN THE EXAM HALL.

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**HERE'S SOME MORE INFORMATION**

http://doctorwellgood.com/feature/sleep.html

http://www.doctorwellgood.com/clinic-a-z/sleep.html
Your brain is 20% of your body weight but consumes up to 25% of your energy and oxygen.

For more information visit www.doctorwellgood.com

EAT, DRINK, EXERCISE
IT’S A TREBLE WHAMMY

1. THE BRAIN IS INCREDIBLY GREEDY AND BURNS HEAPS OF CALORIES.

2. CONCENTRATION IS REALLY HARD WORK AND BURNS HEAPS OF CALORIES.

3. TOWARDS THE END OF THE EXAM, WHEN YOU’RE FIGHTING FOR EVERY MARK, YOU START GETTING TIRED AND YOUR JUDGEMENT STARTS TO GO

BREAKFAST IS THE MOST IMPORTANT MEAL OF THE DAY – EVERY DAY FROM NOW UNTIL YOUR LAST EXAM

Loads of studies show that having breakfast means people do better in class. Actually the fact that the body needs food when it wakes up is a no-brainer – especially if you haven’t had the 9.25 hours sleep you require. But don’t be tempted to grab a quick sugar rush – slow burn stuff is much better to help you concentrate on an exam day.

EATING PROPERLY

In general a good diet will keep you healthy for all aspects of your life. At exam times it is particularly important:

- Eat ‘a rainbow’ – a range of different foods, especially brightly coloured ones
- 5 a day fruit and veg
- Try and eat more fish – especially oily fish like salmon
- Brown bread, oats and other cereals will give you slow burn longer lasting energy
- Try and avoid caffeine, too much sugar, too much salt

IF YOU’VE GOT A 2, 3 OR 4 WEEK EXAM PERIOD, EATING WELL AND CONSISTENTLY WILL HELP ENSURE YOUR PERFORMANCE STAYS AT THE SAME LEVEL

GRAZING KEEPS YOUR BLOOD SUGAR ON AN EVEN KEEL

At times when you really need to perform, eating little and often is a great strategy for keeping your blood sugar at the right level. Snack on power foods like, fresh fruit, soft dried apricots, fruit bread or malt loaf, cheese, raisins, bananas and nuts.

BUT SOMETIMES ONLY A BAR OF CHOCOLATE WILL DO!

Let’s be honest what with all the studying and concentration exams are incredibly hard work. No matter how well you eat or what you have for breakfast there will be days when you get to the exam hall really struggling. On days when you need an extra kick or a pick-me-up please go right ahead and have a bar of chocolate or an energy drink. (Although if you want to keep it healthy a cereal bar might be better!)
Around 50% of students report hay fever symptoms during exams.

If you suffer from hay fever you are 40% more likely to drop a grade.

If you suffered last year, plan your medication to start early.

For more information visit www.doctorwellgood.com

http://doctorwellgood.com/clinic-a-z/hay-fever.html
Try and avoid grass and mown lawns, fields, trees, etc
Keep your bedroom windows shut – pollen hangs around more in the morning and at night

IF IT’S HAYFEVER SEASON
IT MUST BE TIME FOR YOU TO TAKE EXAMS!

HIDE – STAY OUT OF THE WAY OF POLLEN

Tree pollen comes first, then grass pollen then things like Rape Seed oil pollen. Get to know which ones affect you (you’d be really unlucky to be affected by all of them) so you know when to look out.

POLLEN SEASON GOES ON A LONG TIME

Pollen is so light that as the day warms up it floats high into the sky. Early in the morning it’s all around you then last thing at night it falls back to earth. If possible stay indoors with the windows closed.

IF YOU GET HAYFEVER SYMPTOMS YOU ARE 40% MORE LIKELY TO DROP AN EXAM GRADE FROM JANUARY TO SUMMER

POLLEN IS WORSE IN THE MORNING AND AT NIGHT

There is simply no justice*

WHEN IT COMES TO HAVING HAYFEVER AT EXAM TIME – DO WHATEVER IT TAKES TO MAKE SURE YOU PERFORM TO YOUR VERY BEST

*Hopefully one day the authorities will see sense and move the exams to winter time so it’s a level playing field.

Putting petroleum jelly in and around your nostrils may not be cool but it can trap pollen. Wearing wrap-around sun-glasses can not only be cool but can protect your eyes.

YOUR CHEMIST MAY BE MORE HELPFUL THAN YOUR DOCTOR. ASK ABOUT:
- Tablets – make sure they’re non-drowsy
- Nasal sprays
- Eye drops

MEDICATION, MEDICATION, MEDICATION

WASH IT OFF

Pollen gets stuck in your hair, on your skin and on your clothes.
Grab a shower morning and night and wash your hair – we know this can be a real pain but, especially if you’ve got long hair, the pollen is right next to your nose and face.
Go for clean clothes every day – OR HOOVER your coat, jacket, jumper or fleece every night.

MEDICATION

http://doctorwellgood.com/clinic-a-z/hay-fever.html
Remember:
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WE’RE TELLING YOU IT’S GOING TO BE WORTH IT!

GOOD LUCK!

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