

# Boosting mind and body for Exams

## Avoid marathon study sessions

Marathon study sessions are not advised. Breaking your study day into sections will help as it is harder to concentrate for long periods without a break. A study plan will help achieve this. It is important to allow time for sleep, exercise and fun.

## Energy food

When studying and facing into exams, energy levels are important. A healthy balanced diet is important and there are certain foods that will help prevent an energy lull. Oatmeal it releases energy slowly. Therefore porridge is an ideal start to your day as you are less likely to get hungry before lunch and you should not have an energy lull. Coffee stimulates the mind and makes us more productive at work and study. Limiting your coffee intake to two cups per day can be very beneficial for our energy levels. Drinking more than two cups of coffee per day is counterproductive as you end up getting withdrawal symptoms, one of which include fatigue. The same is true when you drink too much tea. It is important to drink plenty of water when drinking coffee as coffee is a mild diuretic and can leave you dehydrated.

## Lunch

Many students experience fatigue or a dip in energy after lunch, so if you experience this you may need to change what you eat for lunch. High-protein lunches appear to produce greater alertness and more focused attention, whereas lunches that are high in fat tend to lead to greater fatigue, sleepiness and distraction. Chicken, tuna, lean beef and eggs are examples of lunch options that are high in protein and low in fat.

## Bananas

They are rich in Vitamin B6, potassium, vitamin C and Fibre. They are an ideal healthy snack if you have a sugar craving while studying as they taste great and contain plenty of carbohydrates, the body's main source of energy. Chocolate, sweets and other high sugar snacks cause an energy crash within a couple of hours as they raise sugar levels quickly but there is soon a sudden drop causing tiredness. Other fruits such as grapes, apples and watermelon are also fat free energising snacks which are full of nutrients.



## **Water**

Staying hydrated is important to ensure all our nutrients are absorbed properly. Water also means we can release heat by sweating. Dehydration causes fatigue. In a climate like Ireland, we should aim to drink about 6 to 8 glasses of water per day (approx 1.2 litres) to stop us getting dehydrated.

## **B vitamins**

Our body uses a variety of enzymes to break down food and convert it to energy. Many vitamins are needed for this process, particularly the B vitamins B1, B2, B3, B5 and B6. Therefore B vitamins are essential for energy release. Example of good sources of B vitamins include bananas, lentils, potatoes, beans, brewers yeast, egg yoke and yogurt. The B vitamins have many other roles in the body including ensuring a healthy central system and immune system, promoting metabolism and ensuring cell growth.

## **Whelehan's Energy Tonic**

There is no substitute for healthy eating to ensure you get the maximum amount of energy releasing nutrients. However, if you feel you need a pick me up in the run up to exams, Whelehan's Tonic can give you the energy boost you need. We make it up in store and it contains all the B vitamins and iron. These vitamins can be especially lacking in people who are not fond of fruit and vegetables.

## **Fish Oils**

There is evidence that omega 3 fatty acids supplementation is an effective stress buster. This is important during the busy and stressful exam period. Studies report highly significant improvement in mood from omega 3 fatty acids supplementation. Research has shown a link between the amount of a fish people in different countries eat and the level of depression. In Japan, where people eat on average 70kg of fish a year, the rate of depression is 0.12%. Whereas in New Zealand, where people eat only 18kg of fish a year, the rate of depression is almost 50 times higher. It is thought that omega 3 may help your brain work more efficiently, so serotonin, which can boost your mood, has more of an effect on you. DHA has been shown in research to aid memory and concentration. Omega 3 fatty acids are primarily found in oily fish such as salmon, fresh tuna, mackerel, herring, sardines and pilchards. Everyone should eat two portions of fish per week, one of them oily.

## **Morepa®**

The richest and purest source of Omega 3 EPA fish oil you can buy. The capsules are free from odour and any fishy taste due to the addition of natural lemon.

Just one capsule per day gives you the entire Omega 3 EPA you need. Instead of taking three to five capsules of fish oil a day with other brands, you only have to take one single capsule of MorEPA®. At Whelehans Pharmacy, we recommend it for students studying for exams as the EPA in MorEPA® reduces stress levels while DHA aids memory and concentration.

## **Rescue Remedy®**

Rescue Remedy® has been giving support to those facing into exams, driving tests, interviews and other stressful situations for years. Rescue Remedy® is made up of mixture of flower extracts. Its effects are not scientifically proven, however in Whelehans over the years I have encountered many people who find it very beneficial in reducing nerves and tension before a stressful event. In Whelehans, as well as the traditional Rescue Remedy® drops and spray, we now keep Rescue® chewing gum which proves very popular for students facing into exams

**Disclaimer: Please ensure you consult with your healthcare professional before making any changes recommended**

For comprehensive and free health advice and information call in to Whelehans, log on to [www.whelehans.ie](http://www.whelehans.ie) or dial 04493 34591. You can also e-mail queries to [info@whelehans.ie](mailto:info@whelehans.ie).