

GHENT UNIVERSITY GOES OUTSIDE: EXAM STRESS IN TIMES OF CORONA

Are you going to an exam on campus after weeks in quarantine?

Experiencing **stress** is quite normal: you have to take an exam, you are allowed to go outside for the first time after a long period, you are concerned about the risk of contamination for yourself and your environment and there are many rules that you have to follow. All those **different sources of stress accumulate**. Experiencing stress, feeling tension or finding yourself in an insecure situation is a **normal response** to an **abnormal situation**.

Recognize your stress symptoms!



Body
headache, muscle pain, short of breath
less appetite
fatigue, trouble sleeping
palpitations, sweaty hands

Feelings

nervous
sad mood, irritable
fear of leaving your bubble
feeling lifeless, powerlessness



Thoughts
forgetfulness
black-out during exams
concentration problems
stuck in negative thoughts

Behaviour

perform less, make mistakes
cry faster, burst into anger faster
smoking more, using alcohol or drugs
restlessness



Getting out of your safe context is a big step. How do you deal with this?

Leaving your safe bubble after weeks is a big step and can cause **anxiety**. Try to face your fear and try not to avoid the situation. **Avoidance** maintains your fear. Overcome in small steps and be gentle with yourself.



Try to focus on your exam
Ghent University employees ensure that everything runs smoothly and safely.



Prepare yourself
This [checklist](#) will get you started.



Get used to 'the new normal' already
Keeping your distance means caring for each other.



Do it step by step
Take a selfie with your mask, go outside with it...



You are not alone in this
Share your concerns with your fellow students: talk about it and encourage each other!



Don't get stuck in negative thoughts
More information and tips on how to get through this difficult period can be found [here](#)

Do you panic during your exams?

What can you do in advance?

Think about what you will do when the nerves dominate. Applying on the moment itself then becomes easier.

For example, practice the breathing exercise below at home.

Gently breathe in and out and relax

It's okay, try to breathe (sigh, yawn). Don't rush, you will be fine. Take your time to calm down.

Shift your attention

Keep your attention on what you see and not on what you feel. Take a look around and list in yourself 5 things that you see.

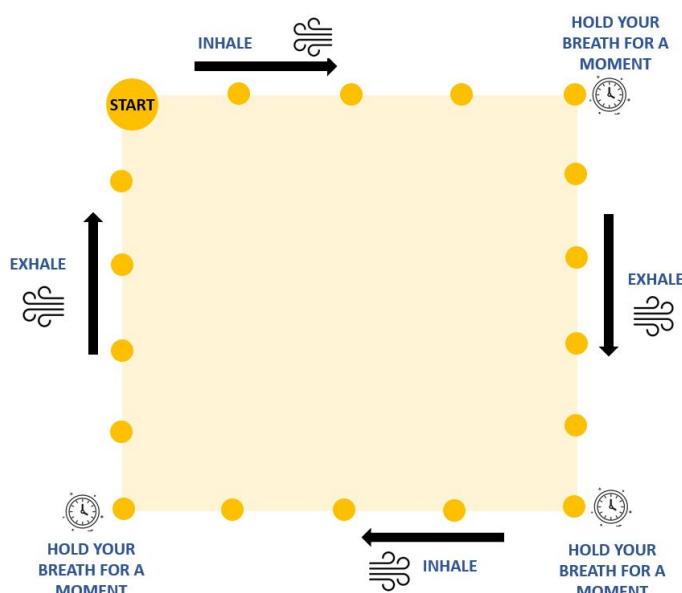
Focus on helping thoughts

Encourage and reassure yourself. Think in advance of a helping thought to cope with your stress during the exam.

Important! Coughing during the exam can be related to dry air, nerves or a mild cold. No need to panic!

Let's practice!

THE BREATHING SQUARE



Relax by using the Breathing Square

Among other things you can relax by gently breathing in and out through your belly. It is very easy. You use it like this:

Start at the top left dot and inhale. It can be helpful to follow the dots on the square. Hold your breath for a moment at the corner ...
And exhale at the same pace of your inhaling. Again you can follow the dots on the square. Keep repeating this until your breathing deepens and you feel more relaxed*.

* It is important to follow **your own pace** and do what feels right for you. Make sure that the duration of the **exhalation** is always equal to or **slightly longer** than the **inhalation**!

Also practice this when being calm. Practicing twice a day in advance will help you when you need it.

Do you feel you would benefit from talking to a professional caregiver because it's getting too much for you?

Contact tele-onthaal

www.tele-onthaal.be
☎ 106

As a student schedule an online session

🌐 <https://www.contentingent.be/waar-kan-ik-terecht>

Chat with a caregiver of JAC

🌐 <https://www.caw.be/jac/>

More useful links

