



# A Guide to Thriving in Final Year



- 1 Get adequate sleep**
- 2 Break up study time**
- 3 Talk out loud while studying**
- 4 Reduce digital distractions**
- 5 Feed the brain**
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The final year of school can be one of the most challenging periods in a young person's life—and equally stressful for their parents. With many final-year students experiencing high levels of anxiety or stress, it's clear this milestone can take a toll on mental health. But it doesn't have to.

Thriving in the final year is about more than just exam results. It's about maintaining balance, supporting wellbeing and understanding how the brain functions under pressure. When students take care of their physical and mental health, their ability to focus, retain information and perform improves significantly.

Not all stress is bad. When it is managed well, it can actually enhance performance. The key lies in recognising healthy stress levels and equipping students with strategies to maintain focus, build resilience and stay motivated. Parents and caregivers can guide their children through the ups and downs of this important year, ensuring they feel confident, capable, and ready to succeed, not just academically, but emotionally too.



## 1. Get adequate sleep

Teenagers, especially final-year students, need between 8 to 9 hours of sleep each night for optimal brain function. This allows them to enter the REM (Rapid Eye Movement) stage of sleep repeatedly, helping the brain consolidate what they've learned during the day.

## 2. Break up study time

Students need to break study sessions into 20-minute segments with 5-minute breaks. This method is more effective because the brain encodes information better in short, repeated sessions. During breaks, encourage them to go for a walk or even play with a pet.



## 3. Talk out loud while studying

Saying information out loud helps students to retain it better. This is known as the "production effect". Thinking aloud also helps with problem-solving and working through complex tasks.

## 4. Reduce digital distractions

Social media is one of the biggest distractions. Encourage students to put their phone on silent and leave it in another room while studying. Try using tools like 'Cold Turkey', a program that blocks distracting websites while still allowing study-related internet access.



## 5. Feed the brain

Many students skip breakfast and this could be harmful during their final year. Eating foods that fuel the brain is crucial. Encourage them to eat more wholegrain cereals, eggs, Greek yogurt, blueberries, fish, avocados, walnuts and pistachios.



## 6. Stay Hydrated

Sipping water every 20 minutes keeps the brain hydrated, which helps boost focus, concentration and motivation. Even mild dehydration can reduce concentration by 10–20%.

## 7. Exercise Regularly

The majority of teens don't meet daily physical activity requirements. Exercise improves brain cell repair, memory and attention span, decision-making, multitasking and planning abilities



## 8. Understand good stress

A little stress is okay and actually improves performance. A moderate amount of stress can push the brain to its optimal level of performance. Remind students that some stress is normal, and even necessary, during their final year.