



SHORT STUDY 2024

Facts and tips on exam nerves

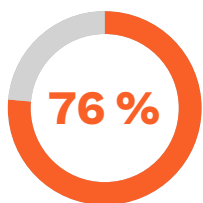
The truth about exam nerves? Almost everyone experiences them

More than nine out of ten people in the United Kingdom have experienced exam nerves – especially at school or university. But many respondents have also experienced feelings of anxiety when applying for a job. **That's according to a representative short study by LIBF.**

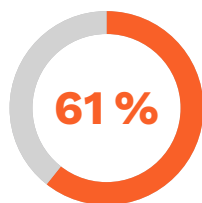
91 %

of all respondents have experienced exam nerves at one time or another.

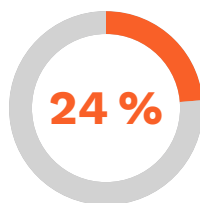
In which of the following situations have you had exam nerves?



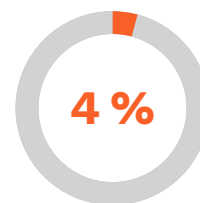
At school/university



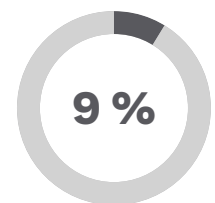
When applying for a job



During vocational training



In other situations



I have never had exam nerves

Do you feel that your exam nerves are taken seriously? *

Yes: 35 %

No: 65 %

— **Almost two thirds feel that their exam nerves are not taken seriously.**

* Respondents who have experienced exam nerves at school/university and/or during vocational training.

Due to rounding off, there could be marginal deviations in the results.

Exam nerves come from the fear of failure



Respondents report that exam nerves arise primarily from the fear of failure – and its consequences. Another reason for exam nerves is having high expectations of yourself.

What are the key reasons for your nerves before an exam? Top 5 answers *

- 17 %:** I've already frequently had bad experiences before exams
- 29 %:** I fear other people's reactions (eg, parents, employer, friends)
- 43 %:** I have excessive expectations of myself
- 49 %:** I feel that I haven't prepared enough
- 57 %:** I am anxious about the consequences of a bad mark



Exam nerves impede careers and life goals

54 % of respondents with exam nerves say: "Exam nerves have or had an impact on my professional career." This is because the fear of tests, exams, and the like, stands in the way of careers or prevents respondents from achieving the qualifications they wanted. Exam nerves also cost time and money, because as a result vocational training courses take longer and exams have to be retaken.

What repercussions have your exam nerves had for you until now?

Of the 54 % of respondents who faced repercussions due to exam nerves*



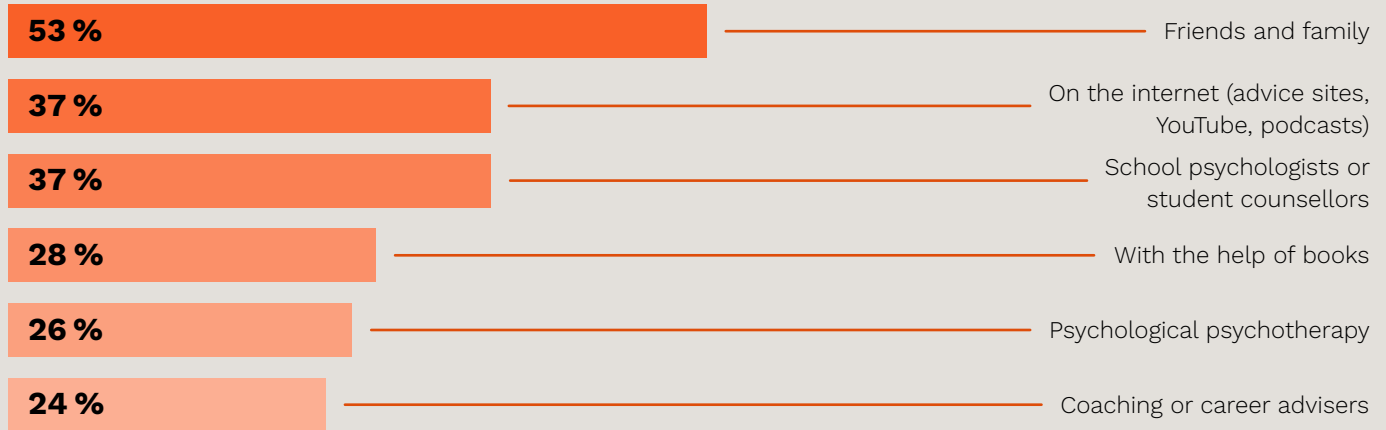
* Respondents who have experienced exam nerves at school/ university and/or during vocational training.

Help or no help?

Very few seek support

Where and how did you seek help?

Of the 18 % of respondents who have sought help – top 6 answers *



Only **18 %** have ever sought help in combatting their exam nerves.¹

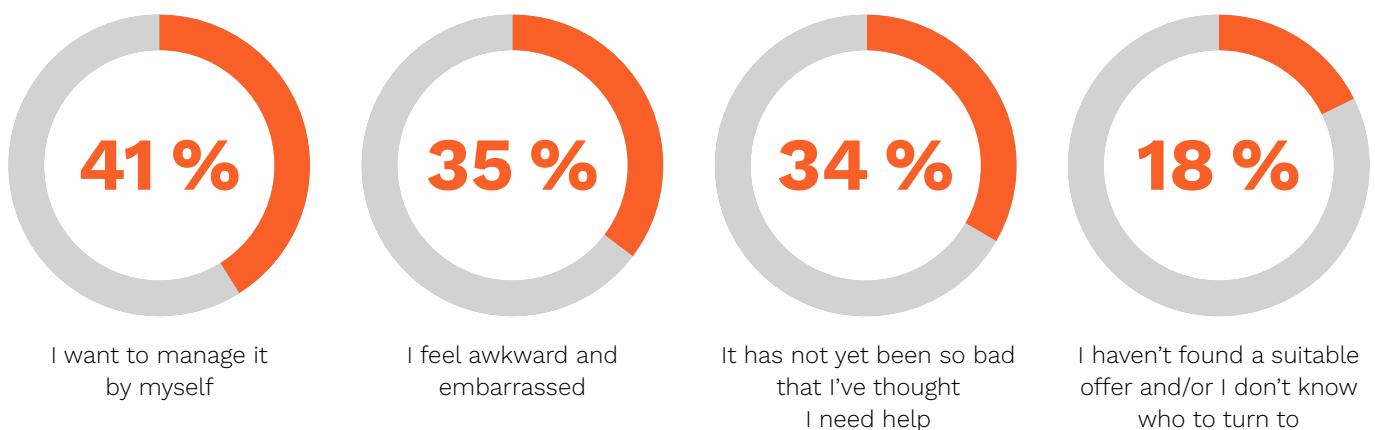
¹ Have you ever sought help in order to combat your exam nerves?

“Why don’t you get help?”

Pride and shame are the main reasons why respondents do not seek help. Four out of ten want to overcome their exam nerves by themselves and over a third are ashamed of their nerves.

Why have you not yet sought help?

Of the 82 % of respondents who have not yet sought help – top 4 answers *

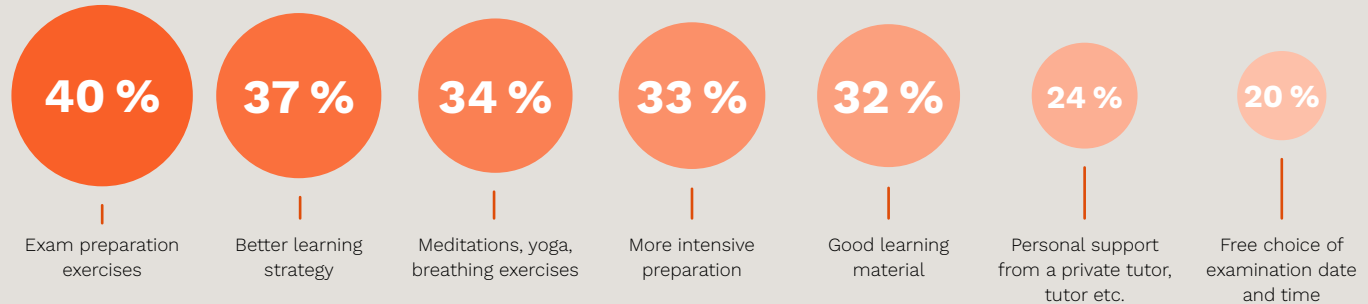


* Respondents who have experienced exam nerves at school/ university and/or during vocational training.

“What could help combat your exam nerves?”

What helps/could help you to reduce your fear of an exam situation? Top 7 answers *

* Respondents who have experienced exam nerves at school/ university and/or during vocational training.



Curing exam nerves: these pro tips can help

A conversation with our Careers Team at LIBF

What can one do before, and during, exams to combat exam nerves?

“Practice deep breathing to calm nerves before the exam. Visualise success, reinforcing positive outcomes. You can also break down the exam into manageable sections, focusing on one at a time. Stay hydrated and maintain a balanced diet for brain function. Sleep well the night before to enhance alertness and concentration.”

Many experts say that a learning strategy is also very important.

What exactly does that mean?

“This is a structured and intentional way of acquiring and retaining new information. A learning strategy enhances understanding and can help deal with exam nerves. It involves methods such as effective note-taking, active engagement with the material, setting goals, and employing mnemonic devices.”

Your research looks at the use and benefits of hypnotherapy.

Can you tell us how that might relate to combating exam nerves?

“By fostering relaxation and enhancing confidence through guided imagery and positive suggestions, hypnotherapy can mitigate anxiety and improve focus. Incorporating hypnotic techniques into pre-exam routines may empower students to manage stress, fostering a conducive mindset for optimal performance.”

3 top tips to combat exam nerves

1. Practice deep breathing and visualise success
2. Break down exam into manageable sections
3. Stay hydrated, eat healthily and get sleep

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Target group:

1,600 respondents between the ages of 16 and 65 in the UK; representative of age and gender for the British population

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Panel: Dynata

Survey period: 4 to 11 October 2023