

# Exam Survival Checklist

*A brain-friendly guide for neurodivergent students*

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## Before the Exam (Preparation Phase)

- ☐ Study in short, realistic blocks (20–40 minutes)
  - ☐ Plan rest as part of studying - recovery helps memory consolidate
  - ☐ Use active recall (practice questions, summaries from memory)
  - ☐ Externalize information (lists, mind maps, flashcards)
  - ☐ Prepare sensory supports (earplugs, noise-cancelling headphones if allowed)
  - ☐ Choose comfortable clothing with minimal sensory irritation
  - ☐ Eat something steadying (protein + complex carbs)
  - ☐ Hydrate
  - ☐ Get as much rest as possible - perfection is not required
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## The Day of the Exam

- ☐ Arrive early to reduce time pressure
  - ☐ Ground your body before starting (slow breathing, feet on the floor)
  - ☐ Remind yourself: *This exam measures performance under stress - not my worth*
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## During the Exam

- ☐ Start with questions that feel safest or most familiar
  - ☐ If your mind blanks, pause and slow your breathing (long exhales)
  - ☐ Use allowed movement or sensory regulation (posture shifts, pressure)
  - ☐ Take micro-pauses instead of forcing through fatigue
  - ☐ If overwhelmed, reorient: notice the room, your breath, your body
  - ☐ Focus on clarity, not speed
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## If Cognitive Fatigue or Overload Appears

- ☐ Recognize it as a biological signal, not a failure
  - ☐ Switch question types if possible
  - ☐ Simplify: write key words first, then build answers
  - ☐ Keep going gently - consistency beats force
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## After the Exam

- ☐ Eat and hydrate
  - ☐ Allow decompression time before self-evaluation
  - ☐ Avoid immediate rumination or self-criticism
  - ☐ Rest your nervous system (quiet, low stimulation)
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## Remember

- You are not lazy - exams are neurologically demanding
  - Needing supports does not mean needing less challenge
  - One exam is one data point, not a definition
  - Your brain deserves respect, not punishment
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### **Mindly Different**

Coaching for the beautifully different mind

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