

Preparing for exams

1. Spacing & timing of revision

What is spacing?

- Spacing is a revision technique which is all about **spacing out your revision** so you don't get swamped and overwhelmed.
- It means introducing **time intervals** into your revision sessions as well as spacing out the days which you revise for topics
- To commit something to memory, it takes time and repetition.



Did you know....

- Doing something little and often – **spacing** – beats doing it at once, or cramming.
- Revising for eight hours in one day is not as effective as doing one hour of revision for eight days.

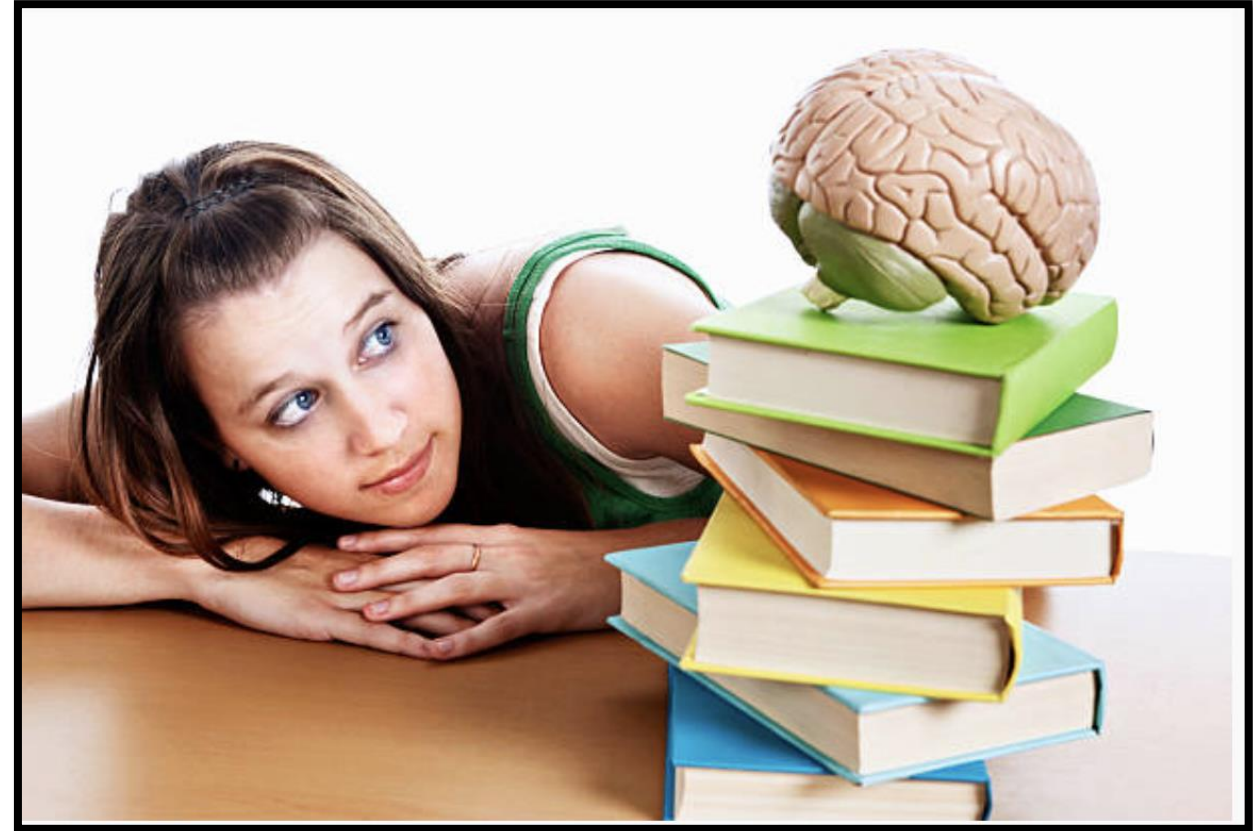
WHY?

This is because the time in between allows you to forget and re-learn the information, which cements it in your **long-term memory**.

The 'Spacing Effect'

The '**Spacing Effect**' is one of the longest and most enduring findings in cognitive psychology.

It was first detailed in 1885 by German psychologist Hermann Ebbinghaus who found that humans tend to forget large amounts of information if they only learn something once.



Optimum Spacing

- Research suggests there is an 'optimal gap' between revision sessions so you can retain the information.
- If the test is in a month, you should review the information around once a week. If the test is in a week, create time once a day.



The power of spacing- why should you do it?

- It allows you time for material to be forgotten and relearnt
- It cements information into your long-term memory
- We can learn more information over time than in one longer session
- It is about revising more efficiently

In some studies, using spacing instead of cramming has resulted in a 10% to 30% difference in final test results.

Create the perfect revision plan using the spacing technique

Organisation: determine where you need to focus your time e.g. which subjects, topics, what you know, what you struggle with etc.

Planning: map out what you are going to revise and when. Use a timetable or revision planner to do this. Choose a mixture of subjects topics to focus on each day to make sure you are spacing them out.

[Video - https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zn3497h](https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zn3497h)

Create the perfect revision plan

1. Try and fit your revision around your daily life

First things first, decide what you'd think is best to use for your timetable. Is it a big A3 poster, an Excel sheet, an agenda or calendar. From there on we recommend to do is to break up your day into half an hour session.

2. Fill in your daily life and school timetable

Once you have broken up your week into half an hour sessions, then start filling in when you've got school. Then fill in your actual commitments like clubs, sports, volunteering or work

Create the perfect revision plan

3. Enter your exam subjects

You would then have a blank canvas that you can use to plan your revision. It's usually best to allocate more time to the subjects that you're struggling with and spend less time on the subjects that you already grasp very well. Also, think about the repetition of your revision schedule. Most students create a weekly or bi-weekly schedule. This will quickly create a routine and can make you mentally prepare better for the revision sessions.

4. Colour code your subjects for a clear overview

Another useful tip is to Colour code your template. If you give each subject a different Colour, then you can see at a glance what you're doing and keeps the overview nice and clear.

Reflect

Have you made your revision timetable yet? When this week can you give yourself 2 hours to do this?

Five hours of time, spent in smaller chunks and spaced periodically, is a far more effective way to learn something than five hours spent the night before.

The evidence is overwhelming.

Now you just need to do it.



Resources

Video you can watch

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PzcV4aOB8bE>

Downloadable templates

<https://blog-media.unidays.world/media/b6fa9655-8146-49c2-9662-cea61792e861>

Online revision timetables

<https://getrevising.co.uk/planner>

<https://revisionworld.com/create-revision-timetable>

Revision timetable apps

<https://getadapt.co.uk/>

<https://www.mystudylife.com/>