

**Move up a Grade:
Revision Strategy and Exam Preparation**

**A revision guide for students in all subjects at
school, university, and professional levels**

By Ross Maynard FCMA

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Why you should follow a Revision Plan

Slide 1

Hi, I'm Ross Maynard and this is Move up a grade. A revision guide for students in all subjects at school, university and professional levels

I am a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants. In my final stage accountancy exams I came second in the world! That is to say that, of the more than 4,000 people that sat the exam that session, I got the second highest mark.

I say this not to boast, but to illustrate the power of a good exam revision strategy. I am by no means the second best accountant of that group of 4000 - I lack the attention to detail and the patience - but I do have a brilliant exam revision strategy, and I am going to share it with you.

My revision strategy ensured that I got A's in all but one exam over three years in all the stages of my qualification. That's 10 out of 11 exams. The exam I didn't get an A in was Financial Accounting (Stage 2). I analysed where I went wrong, applied the strategy, and the following year I got an A in Advanced Financial Accounting.

This course will explain my revision strategy to you. Follow it and I can almost guarantee that you will get a better mark than you would have without it.

Slide 2 Get a better grade with an effective revision strategy

You can get a better grade with an effective revision strategy and, in fact, the strategy is very easy – rotate your subjects; stick to your timetable; and follow the guide to doing exams.

But remember there are no quick fixes.

You still have to work - hard!

This exam strategy will make sure you cover all the bases and are in the best frame of mind to do well, but it does not remove the need to do the hours. You still have to do lots of revision. It's just that this strategy provides a framework to make sure those hours are spent in the best possible way.

Transition

There are no magic pills. You still have to do the work.

So, read on, and prepare to get to work.

Slide 3 Our Agenda

Our agenda for this course is as follows:

- Structure your day and week – the revision timetable
- Revision Phases 1 - 4
- Exam Preparation
- A Simple Technique to Reduce Stress and Boost Learning
- The Day of the Exam: What to do; what not to do
- After the Exam: What worked; what didn't work
- Final thoughts on revision

Slide 4 Sub Section

1. Structure your Day and your Week: Prepare a Revision Timetable

Slide 5 Structure your day and week

You have to put the hours in to do well in your exams. This revision strategy will help you structure those hours and get in the best frame of mind for the exams, but you still have to do the work.

That means you need a revision timetable. Here are the steps.

1. Start your revision early. I recommend at least 8 weeks before the exams start.
 2. How do you study best? I am a morning person, but not an evening person, so I used to start my day's work at 8.30am and finish at 6pm. You might want to start later and finish later.
-

3. Leave a two hour break in the middle! It's shocking I know. Two hours without revising in the middle of each day! But actually your brain is still revising – compiling everything you have done – and taking your mind off revision for a while will help you work better in the second half of the day. You need to do something active during the two hour break and we'll come back to this later.
4. Only revise for 5½ days a week. That's right, you're allowed most of the weekend off. Your mind needs a break from constant revising, and you need a life, so make the most of that day and a half off. But make sure you still get half a day's revision in over the weekend. For me that was Sunday morning before anyone else was up, but you might choose a different time – just make sure you do it.
5. Plan your revision timetable for the whole period until your exams. Plan your revision timetable around the phases in this strategy

Slide 6 The phases of the revision strategy

6. This revision strategy is split into four phases:
 - a. Phase 1: Read through all of your notes, make summary notes.
 - b. Phase 2: Summarise your summaries – into 10 pages for each subject
 - c. Phase 3: Exam Practice
 - d. Phase 4: The Last Day for Each Subject – Final Read Through

Slide 7 How Much time to spend on each phase:

7. How much time you devote to each phase depends on how much time you have before your exams. I recommend allowing at least 2 weeks, and preferably 2½ weeks solid revision per subject. Here are a couple of scenarios:
-

Four Subjects. Eight Weeks Revision

Week	Subject/ Phase First part of week	Subject/ Phase Second part of week
1	Subject 1, Phase 1 2½ days	Subject 2, Phase 1 2½ days
2	Subject 3, Phase 1 2½ days	Subject 4, Phase 1 2½ days
3	Subject 1, Phase 1 2½ days	Subject 2, Phase 1 2½ days
4	Subject 3, Phase 1 2½ days	Subject 4, Phase 1 2½ days
5	Subject 1, Phase 2 2½ days	Subject 2, Phase 2 2½ days
6	Subject 3, Phase 2 2½ days	Subject 4, Phase 2 2½ days
7	Subject 1, Phase 3 2½ days	Subject 2, Phase 3 2½ days
8	Subject 3, Phase 3 2½ days	Subject 4, Phase 3 2½ days
Exams Commence	Phase 4 all subjects	Phase 4 all subjects

In this scenario, you get 5 days for Phase 1 of each subject (summarising notes); and then 2½ days for Phase 2 for each subject (summarising the summaries into 10 pages). After that, you get 2½ days exam practice for each subject. Phase 4, the final read through, takes place during the exam period.

The half-day revision time you have planned over each weekend should be spent catching up if you are behind; or skimming the material for the following week so you know what to expect.

Slide 8 How Much time to spend on each phase: Summary

In summary, for each subject:

- Plan 5 days for Phase 1 - summarise notes, split into two halves
- Plan 2½ days for Phase 2 – reduce summaries to 10 pages
- Plan 2½ days for Phase 3 Practice exams
- Plan as much time as you can during the exam period for Phase 4 – final read throughs

The more subjects you have the longer revision period you need. For 5 subjects, I recommend 12 weeks! Otherwise you are going to have to reduce the amount of time you spend on each phase

Slide 9 Structure your day and week: Action

ACTION:

Buy a cheap wall calendar, or print one online. Fill in your revision plan for the four revision phases, allowing at least 2 weeks solid revision per subject.

Slide 10: Start each day on a positive note. Be positive about what success will do for you

2. Start Each Day on a Positive Note

Slide 11 Start each day on a positive note

Study leave can seem a grind. It is often sunny outside and you are stuck inside in your room, or at the dining room table, reading and summarising a load of material. It is easy to get gloomy about it – and, then, excuses for not doing it present themselves.

Remember, these exams are not a personal attack on you. They are not about you at all. They are simply a chore that has to be got through so you can get on with your life.

They are a job that has to be done, that's all. Stop worrying about them. Stop dwelling on the thought of them. Just get on with the job! This revision strategy will help you do better than you have ever done before, so you don't need to worry so much.

Like any tedious job that has to be done, it is best to stop dwelling on the grimness of it all and just get on with it.

Put away any negative feelings and do the time!

Transition

My daughter's motto during her recent exams (she got five A's) was "just put your 'thing' down". She found that a useful way of de-personalising the exam process to make it less stressful. She just had to go in there and do her "thing". No point in building it up into some big problem. Just prepare well and go and put your "thing" down. If you follow this strategy you will have prepared as well as you possibly can.

Slide 12 Starting the Day

One way to help alleviate the grind of the revision period is to start each day on a positive note. Eat a nice breakfast, and then do something to get your energy levels up for 15 minutes. Go for a quick walk around the block; take the dog out for a run; do a 15 minute yoga or exercise video from YouTube.

Start each day with something to freshen up your mind. Fifteen minutes activity to get your brain firing on all cylinders.

Transition

ACTION:

What will your 15 minutes be?

Plan your 15 minutes of activity on your revision calendar.

Slide 13 Part 3: Revision Phase 1: Summarise your Notes

3. Revision Phase 1 – Summarise Your Notes

Slide 14 Revision Phase 1

Phase 1 of this revision strategy is to summarise all the notes you have taken during the course, including notes from the required reading.

The task is to write a heading for each topic you have studied, and make short summary notes. Write these notes longhand on lined paper, or type them. Phase 1 of the revision plan is timetabled to take a total of five days per subject. I split this into two halves in the revision timetable to give your mind a break.

You will end up with around 30 to 50 pages of notes per subject. Where there are complex formulae or diagrams to learn then it is acceptable to put a reference in to the source material. Otherwise the aim is that, during Phase 2, of the revision plan you will refer only to these written notes.

Slide 15 Why Summarise?

The act of summarising and writing out these revision notes is itself learning. Your brain will be absorbing the information in a deeper way than merely highlighting sections in your reading books or class notes.

It is not fun, I realise, but this exercise will get your brain processing all the information in the subject. When you come to Phase 2 of the revision plan the information will be much fresher and clearer to you.

With four subjects to revise, Phase 1 will take the first four weeks of your revision time, with a total of 5 days per subject to summarise everything you have learned. It's a lot to get through, but by the end of the time for each subject you will have a strong grounding in the material and how it all fits together.

The half-day revision time you have planned over each weekend should be spent catching up if you are behind; practising exercises for some of the topics you find difficult; or skimming the material for the following week so you know what to expect.

Slide 16 Phase 1 Action

ACTION:

Review each subject you have to revise. Plan how you can cover the full subject in the number of days allocated to Phase 1 in your revision timetable.

4. Revision Phase 2 - Summarise your Summaries!

Slide 17 Part 4: Revision Phase 2, Summarise your summaries

Slide 18 Revision Phase 2

Phase 1 of this revision strategy has given you a whole load of summary notes – probably 30 to 50 pages worth for each subject. In Phase 2, the task is to boil these notes down to 10 pages per subject!

Along with exam practice in Phase 3, this is the most important part of the revision strategy. The work of scrutinising the summary notes you have already made, and reducing them down again really gets your brain thinking about what is important in the subject you are studying. This is real brain work.

Either write these 10 summary pages by hand, or type them. Your brain will be working hard to understand the information you have to cover, and reduce it to a meaningful précis.

This is an amazingly powerful activity.

Slide 19 By the end of Phase 2

I recommend 2½ days per subject for this phase 2. For four subjects that is 2 weeks

But by the end of Phase 2, you will really know your subject – after all you have had to reduce all the information in it to just 10 pages! The purpose is not to throw away the 30-odd pages of summary notes you produced in Phase 1, but to have a revision crib-sheet that you can use in Phase 4 – the day before your exam to put the key things you need to know to the front of your mind.

There are, sometimes, elements of a subject that cannot be summarised in this way – for example, lists of items, complex formulae, key diagrams. Use references to the source material for these, but summarise as much as you can.

Transition

This 10 page summary is the last thing you will read before you go into the actual exam.

Slide 20 Phase 2 Action

ACTION:

As you are working through your notes for Phase 1 of this revision strategy, start to put a star, or other marker, against the bits that you think you will put in the Phase 2 summary of the summary notes. That will mark those topics or elements as important in your brain.

4. Intermission: Give your Mind a Break every Day

Slide 21 Intermission: Give your Mind a Break every Day

The revision period is an intense time of long days trying to understand large volumes of information. The brain is a muscle and, like any other muscle, it gets tired when overworked. That's why it is important to give your brain time to organise everything it has taken in, and recharge itself every day.

I have already mentioned the importance of 15 minutes of energising activity before you start your revision each day. I also want you to structure your revision days to include a two-hour lunch break.

Slide 23 A Two-hour lunch break?

It may seem scandalous: not revising for a whole two hours in the middle of each day, but it will help your brain to assimilate the information it has taken in. It will help you feel fresher for the afternoon session too.

I strongly believe in the power of exercise to help learning, and I recommend that one hour of the two-hour break should be used for exercise. For me it was cycling or walking; but any exercise is fine – the gym, swimming, whatever you fancy. Even an hour's gardening or (if you must) housework will give your brain a break from study and give it time to process everything it has taken in.

This daily period of exercise will get the blood pumping through your brain refreshing it with oxygen, and giving it time to organise everything you have done that morning. Consciously, you are not thinking about revision, and you get a bit of a break, but, subconsciously, your brain is working away, categorising and sorting your work. It really works, believe me. My grades speak for the power of this strategy.

The remainder of the two-hour break is to give you time to shower and eat a satisfying lunch. You can then return to the revision table with your brain ready to take in some more.

Slide 24 Give your Mind a Break: Action

ACTION:

What exercise will you do each day? Plan it into your revision timetable. It's good to do different types of exercise through the week to mix it up.

5. Revision Phase 3 – Exam Practice

Slide 25 Revision Phase 3 – Exam Practice

Slide 26 Phase 3: Exam Practice

Knowing your subject is not enough. Phases 1 and 2 of this revision strategy will have given you a strong grasp of the subjects you have to study, but you also need to know how the exam works.

Importantly, you need to know how the marks work in the exam, and we'll come back to that in section 8, exam preparation. You also need to know how the questions work.

There may be a choice of questions with equal marks – in which case each question gets equal time.

More common perhaps, there might be several long compulsory questions, and then shorter questions chosen from a list. You need to spread the time you have available in the exam across the questions you need to do in proportion to the number of marks available. It is no use spending a load of time on a question you really love, when there are only a limited number of marks available for it. You must allocate your time according to the marks available and you must stick to your allocation rigidly.

Slide 27 Allocating Exam time

Let's say a three-hour exam has three compulsory questions of 30 marks each and then you choose 3 questions from a list of eight, each with 20 marks, that means the exam has a total of 150 marks each.

There are 180 minutes in the exam meaning there are 1 minute 12 seconds per mark. For the compulsory questions that is 36 minutes per question (let's call it 35)

For the secondary questions that is 24 minutes per question (call it 22)

That leaves 9 minutes at the end to cover any final points

Slide 28 planning Phase 3

Phase 3 of the revision strategy is exam practice. Get past papers (these are usually available on the examining body's website, or you can buy past papers), and work through them.

I recommend 2½ days per subject for Phase 3, and I recommend splitting this two ways as follows:

- For the first day, read through each past paper (or mock paper) and make bullet point notes about how you would answer each question. What would you include for that question, and how would you frame it? When you have done that, review the example answer given and see how well it corresponds to your proposed answer. Give yourself a rough mark of how well you covered the points in the suggested answer.
- For the remaining day and a half, make yourself do some more recent exam papers under exam conditions. If it is a three-hour exam, give yourself three hours to tackle last year's past paper. Complete the practice exam exactly as you would the real one, when the time comes. That will give you a feel for any gaps in your knowledge and it will help you understand how the time pressures impact on your answers. Be strict about allocating time to each answer and do not go over that time.

Phase 3 is about recalling the information you have learned in Phases 1 and 2, and effectively structuring answers in the time available.

Transition

The purpose of Phase 3 is to become familiar with the way the exam is structured, so that you know how you are going to plan your time before you go into the exam hall. It also helps build your confidence. By the end of the 2½ days for each subject you should realise that you know your material pretty well and you can bash out a good answer on most of the topics in the time available.

At the end of Phase 3, you are ready to “put your thing down”. You know you have the knowledge, and you know you have the exam technique. You know you will do well!

Remember, my rules about 15 minutes activity before you start work, and a two hour break in the middle of your day, still apply. You need to keep your brain exercised and energised.

Slide 29

ACTION:

Before you even start your revision, collect copies of past papers ready for Phase 3. Download them from the exam body website; buy a book of them; or ask your teacher or lecturer where to get copies. Be prepared!

6. Revision Phase 4 – The Final Read Through

Slide 30 Revision Phase 4 – the final read through

Slide 31 The Exam has arrived

The exam period has arrived. You may have a few days before your first exam, or you may be straight into them. Phase 4 of the revision strategy is the final read through of the summaries you have compiled in Phases 1 and 2.

There is no specific time allocated to Phase 4, it depends on how much time you have between your exams. At the very least, it is two to three hours the night before, or morning before, your exam.

In Phase 4 you are reading your summary notes to reassure yourself that you know everything you possibly can. Read your 10-page summary from Phase 2 first, and then read the longer summary notes you made in Phase 1.

With your exam looming, you don't have time to go back to your course books and notes. Your summaries contain everything you need to know to get a good mark.

Transition

Phase 4 is reading your summaries and realising that you know it. Phase 4 is realising you are ready for the exam and, now, just want to get in there, put your "thing" down, and get it done.

Slide 32 Phase 4 Action

ACTION:

We'll come to technique to reduce stress and help your brain process information later.

When you have followed this revision strategy and got to the day before your exam, ponder the following statement

And as you sit there, now, you can wonder as to just how much you have achieved, already; looking back on how you used to be, and thinking - soon being; and how are you, will you be, different?

7. Exam Preparation 1: Understand how the Exam is Structured

Slide 33 Exam preparation 1: understand how the exam is structured

Slide 34 How is the exam structured?

I've said it already. It is not enough just to know your subject. You also need to know how the exam works. Before you start your revision period you should look at past papers and find out how the exam is structured:

- How long is the exam in total? What is the total number of marks available?
- How many minutes of exam time do you have per mark or per question? Refer back to the calculation we did for Phase 3
- Are there compulsory questions? How many minutes should you allow for each of these questions?
- How many questions are there where you get to choose which ones to answer? How many minutes should you allow for each of these questions?
- Are there any other quirks about the exam? For example, reading time might be allowed for a case study or passage of prose, before you are allowed to start the exam. Can you make notes during this time?
- What you are allowed to take into the exam? What pens and pencils do you need? Take a ruler and other tools as required. Are calculators allowed? Make sure you have one (your phone will not be allowed in!).
- Some exams – mainly case-study type ones – are open book, and you are allowed to take books in. What are the key books you will take?
- What time does the exam start? Plan how you will get there in good time
- Where is the exam taking place? Plan your journey.

Slide 35 Exam Preparation 1: Action

ACTION:

Make notes about the exam structure; the timings; the location and what you should take in

Make sure you know about the number and type of questions you must answer and how you will allocate your time

8. Exam Preparation 2: Go for Marks not for Perfection

Slide 36 Exam Preparation 2: Go for marks not for perfection

Slide 37 Go for the Marks

Here's the thing. Many people go into exams, they spot the questions they like and know they can answer, and they spend most of their exam time answering those questions really well, but not leaving enough time to answer the other questions sufficiently well. The result may be a pass, but it will not be a good pass.

The fact is that you have to answer all the questions in order to get a good pass. Even if a question is completely left-field, and you think you know nothing about it, you have to attempt an answer in order to stand any chance of getting a good grade.

Transition

Hopefully all the revision you have done, using the four phases, will mean that there won't be much possibility of a "left-field" question leaving you cold; but you still have to answer the questions the examiners want you to. If there are compulsory questions you have to answer them, whether you like them or not!

Slide 38 Be disciplined

The real key to going up a grade in your exam is to go for marks not perfection. Let's say there's a question on a topic you know really well. The number of marks available mean that you should spend 45 minutes on it; and that is the time you must spend on it – no more. You might have loads of stuff you still want to write about the topic, but when your allocated time is up you **MUST** move onto the next question. That is the only way to get a good grade.

Slide 39 How Exam Marks work

Here is my rough outline of how marking in exams works:

- The first 25% of marks on a question are easy to get. You just have to put down the basics on that topic. Even if you think a question is impossible, you should be able to put down some basic points on the topic and get that first 25%
- The second 25% of marks on a question are about knowing the core of the topic, but doesn't require any advanced knowledge. If you have followed this revision strategy you should be able to get these marks easily. Answer the question competently, staying on-topic, and you'll get the marks.
- The third 25% of marks on a question require some flair. They require more than the basic knowledge. The examiner is expecting you to be able to use your knowledge of a topic to argue a cogent case. This clutch of marks is about applying your knowledge to some examples; or presenting an argument in a slightly different way to illustrate your rounded knowledge of the topic. Going for this group of marks will raise you from a "C" to a "B" or even to an "A" (if you can grab just a few marks from the final segment). Applying this revision strategy leaves you in a very strong position to get this third group of marks and, therefore, raise yourself up a grade.
- The final 25% of marks are hard to get. It requires an almost perfect knowledge of the topic, including, possibly, some reading around the subject beyond the syllabus. These marks are very difficult to get within the time-constraints of an exam, but if you have strong knowledge of your subject (helped by this revision strategy) you have a good chance of getting a good chunk of this final group of marks and lifting your grade to an "A".

Slide 40 Your Exam Strategy

Your exam strategy, therefore, should be to stick to the allocated time for each question and go for the 75% of marks you know you can get having revised thoroughly. Do that with all the questions and you should get an A grade.

If you really know a topic, and have a little time left in your allocation, go for some of that final 25% of marks that will lift you to an "A*".

But if your time runs out, move onto the next question whether or not you know you have the knowledge for that final top mark.

Transition

It is better to get 75-80% of the marks in all your questions, than get 95% in one, but only get 50-60% in the others because you don't have enough time left to do better.

Slide 41 One final tip on Exam Strategy

In your allocated time for each question, leave four or five minutes at the end. When you come to those last few minutes, start a section with the heading "If I had more time I would cover the following points"; and do a bullet list of points you would still like to make. You will pick up a few more marks by letting the examiner know that you know more stuff!

Slide 42 Exam Preparation 2 Action

ACTION:

Think through how you are going to get that 75% for each question, and a chunk of the marks of the final 25% in the time you have available for each question.

Transition

Remember. Go for the marks, not perfection

9. A Simple Technique to Reduce Stress and Boost Learning

Slide 43 A Simple Technique to Reduce Stress and Boost Learning

Slide 44 Exams are Stressful

This revision strategy includes a 15-minute energy boost at the start of the day and a two-hour break – with one hour of exercise – to try and reduce the boredom and stress of revision

It's also important to get a good night's sleep so stop your revision at a sensible time and wind-down for a couple of hours before bed

It is also useful to have tool to help you reduce stress and to boost your brain's ability to learn. The tool I am going to teach you is called Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT). It is related to acupuncture and is a very simple and quick way of stimulating energy points in your body which (somehow) gets the brain making new connections. In EFT you tap certain points around your head, torso and hand. This has the effect of both calming you and stimulating the brain's thinking mechanisms.

As an accountant I was extremely sceptical of this technique when I first learned it, but, amazingly, it does work. It only takes about three minutes to run through so it is worth a try even if you are doubtful.

Slide 45 Emotional Freedom Technique

EFT can be used for any challenge or issue you are facing. I've used it to help control pain from a sprained ankle, and for various other minor ailments. It can also be used for emotional problems and is ideal for exam stress.

I don't know how, but it really does work. To work best you need to do it daily for a week or so. I recommend a run-through of the tool each day of your revision before bed. It will help calm you and you will sleep better; and it will help your brain arrange everything it has absorbed during the day.

Here's how to do Emotional Freedom Technique:

9.1 How to do Emotional Freedom Technique

Slide 46 How to do Emotional Freedom Technique

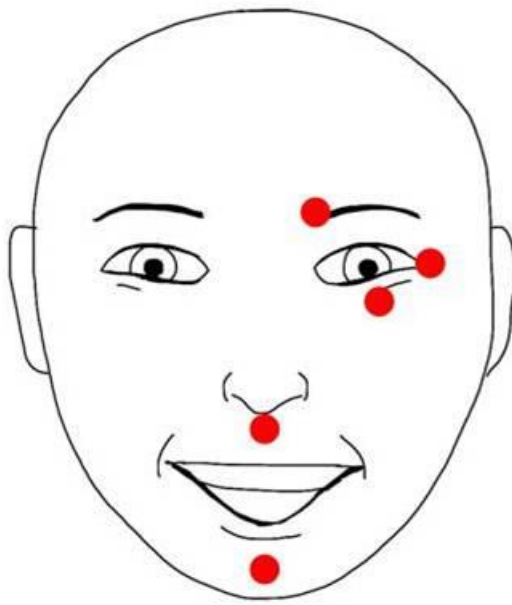
First you need to get ready to carry out EFT:

- i. **Identify the issue.** For example, “I feel nervous about my exams”. In general you should focus on a negative issue you wish to overcome, whether it is in relation to your exams, or any other personal problem.
- ii. **Prepare your affirmation.** The issue you have chosen is inserted into an affirmation phrase. For example:

“Even though I feel nervous about my exams,
I deeply and completely accept myself”

- iii. **Identify your Tapping Phrase.** This is the short phrase, related to your issue, that you will use while tapping. For example, “These exam nerves”; or “My revision success”.
- iv. **Locate the tapping points.** The tapping points are illustrated in the following diagrams:

Slide 47 The Tapping Points: Face



Eyebrow above eye socket

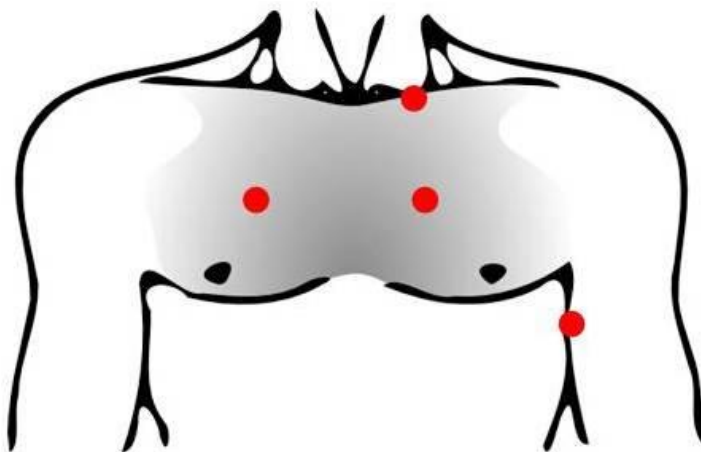
Side of eye

Under eye, centre

Upper lip, under nose

Tip of chin

Slide 48 The Tapping Points: Torso

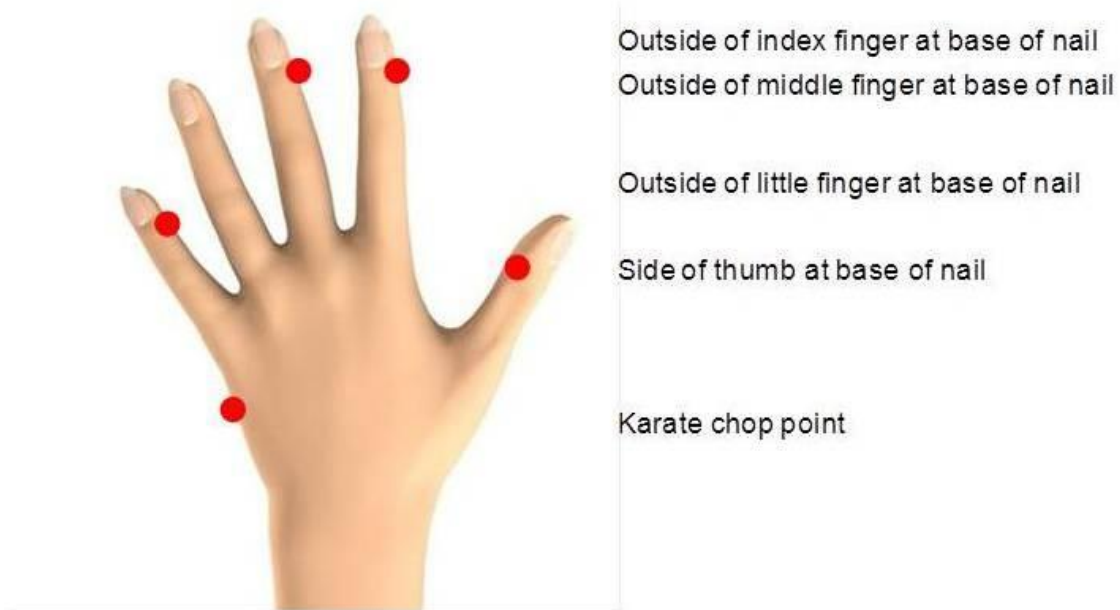


Collarbone

Tender spots (little recess below collarbone on each side)

Under arm

Slide 48 The Tapping Points: Hand



Slide 50 Now we are ready to tap:

- Repeat your affirmation three times while firmly massaging the tender spots in your breast bone, about 2 inches (5 cm) below your collar bone.
- Repeat your tapping phrase three times while tapping firmly (but not hard) on the **eyebrow** above the eye socket. Right-handed people will normally tap their right eyebrow, but either side is fine.
- Repeat your tapping phrase three times while tapping at the **side of your eye**. (Again, either side is fine).
- Repeat your tapping phrase three times while tapping just **under the eye**.
- Repeat your tapping phrase three times while tapping on the **upper lip, under the nose**.
- Repeat your tapping phrase three times while tapping the **tip of your chin**.

Slide 51 Tapping your torso and hand

- Repeat your tapping phrase three times while tapping the **edge of your collar bone** (either side is fine).
 - Repeat your tapping phrase three times while tapping the **under-arm**.
-

- I. Repeat your tapping phrase three times while tapping the **side of your thumb, at the base of the nail.**
- J. Repeat your tapping phrase three times while tapping the **side of your index finger (forefinger), at the base of the nail.**
- K. Repeat your tapping phrase three times while tapping the **side of your middle finger, at the base of the nail.**
- L. Repeat your tapping phrase three times while tapping the **side of your little finger, at the base of the nail.**
- M. Repeat your tapping phrase three times while tapping the **karate chop point** on the edge of your hand.

Slide 52 The eye movements

- N. Close your eyes
- O. Open your eyes
- P. Hold your head still but look down hard right
- Q. Hold your head still but look down hard left
- R. Hold your head still but look down hard right
- S. Hold your head still but look down hard left
- T. Roll your eyes clockwise
- U. Roll your eyes anti-clockwise.
- V. Take a short break to allow your brain to process things.

Slide 53 That was fun

It is weird, I know, but it seems to work for most people so it is worth a try. It will help calm you down, and it will help your brain process the day's learning. Do it at the end of each revision day. If you can find somewhere private, it is worth doing before you go into the exam hall too.

While most right-handed people will do the tapping on the right side of their face, and on their left hand, it doesn't actually matter which side you use; and you can mix it up if you wish. Similarly, it doesn't matter if you mix up the order of the tapping (it'll take a few goes to get used to it).

I know it's odd, but it helps and that's all that matters really. Give it a try!

Slide 54: Emotional Freedom Technique: Action

ACTION:

Choose a concern or a problem and give EFT a go right now!

10. The Day of the Exam: What to Do; What not to Do

Slide 55 The Day of the Exam: What to Do; What not to Do

Slide 56 the day of the exam

Exam rituals are a very personal thing and it is difficult to be prescriptive. However, I will offer some advice: speaking to other people before (and after) the exam can be very damaging to your confidence, and I advise avoiding it!

Yes, I mean it. I advise you avoid speaking to your friends before each exam, because it can be very damaging to your pre-exam frame of mind. The people you speak to before the exam are bound to have their theories about what will and will not come up; and they'll probably express views on how questions should be answered too. These theories and views may well conflict with what you think, or how you have prepared for the exam, and your confidence might get dented. The last thing you need is to start worrying about topics that might come up, or whether your approach is good enough, just before the exam starts.

The best thing, in my opinion, is to avoid all such pre-exam chat. For my professional exams, I arranged to sit them in a town away from where I had studied so that I wouldn't meet anyone I knew. That sounds very anti-social, and it is; but you can have a great get-together with your friends after the exams are all over. The 20 minutes before the exam hall opens is not the time to be getting stressed about questions that might (or might not) arise; or how you should answer questions. The best thing to do is to stay well out of the way until you see the exam hall opening, and then stride confidently in to a desk.

Say "hello" to people you know as you walk in, but don't stop to chat!

Slide 57 Tips for the exam 1

Here are my tips for a successful exam:

- Check out the exam hall well before your exams start. Find where the entrances are.
 - Stay well out of the way, but somewhere where you can see the doors to the exam hall.
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- It's hard, but avoid talking to anyone before the exam if you possibly can. Stay out of the way. Pretend to be on an important phone call if you have to!
- When the doors open, let most other people go in first. Then stride confidently to a seat away from your friends. Smile or wave at your friends as they see you, but don't stop to chat.

Slide 58 Tips for the exam 2

- Lay out your pens and pencils and other items you need. Make sure you have plenty of writing paper. Check where the clock in the exam room is.
- When the exam starts, turn the paper and take a few minutes to read the instructions and all the questions. Check that the time allowed and the marking scheme corresponds to what you have already worked out, and make a note of the time you have allocated to each question.
- Make a quick note of the questions you think you will want to answer (you can decide later on). Start with the compulsory questions.

Slide 59 Tips for the exam 3

- When you get to the last few minutes of your allotted time for each question, write the heading "If I had more time I would cover the following points"; and do a bullet list of points you would still like to make. It might get you a few final marks.
 - Put your "thing" down. Remember the exam is nothing personal. It is just a job that has to be done. So don't take it personally – just do it!
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11. After the Exam: What Worked; What didn't Work

Slide 60 After the Exam: What worked, what didn't work

Slide 61 After the exam

Just as I advise avoiding people before the exam, so that your state of mental calm is not disturbed, I advise avoiding dissecting the exam afterwards with your friends too. It is far too easy to get into a negative state about what you should have said, or how you should have approached a question; and that can affect your approach to the remaining exams. Say "hi" to your friends if you want, but don't stay to chat. Say you have a lift to get, or an appointment with the doctor: just get out of there as soon as you can.

Take the exam paper with you. When you get home have a quick run through, giving yourself a mark for each question you answered depending how well you feel you got on. If you have followed the revision strategy you should feel pretty confident about the exam. If there are any obvious mistakes you made, then remember what to look out for in future exams, but don't dwell on it.

What is done is done. Spend 20 minutes looking over the paper and reassuring yourself that you have done as well as you possibly could. Then put the exam paper aside and go and do something completely different.

If possible, you should avoid any further revision that day. If you have another exam the next day, then you will need to read over your revision notes at the end of the day. Otherwise, give your brain a rest and do something you enjoy for the remainder of the day.

12. Final Thoughts on Revision Strategy and Exam Preparation

Slide 62 final thoughts on revision

Slide 63 Move up a Grade

Exams are a difficult time. I cannot guarantee success, but I believe, if you follow this strategy, you will put yourself in a very strong position for exam success, and should move up at least a grade from what you might have achieved.

The core of the strategy is summarising all your notes in Phase 1, and then condensing them into 10 pages in Phase 2. This is brain work and, following the structure I have created, will mean you really know your subject

The exam practice in Phase 3 means you'll be ready to use that knowledge to the best effect

Slide 64 Key Points 1

The approach I advocate is a simple one. Basically:

- Plan your revision timetable, leaving, if you can, at least five days per subject for Phase 1, 2½ days per subject for Phase 2; and 2½ days per subject for Phase 3; with a day before each exam for Phase 4.
 - Start each day fresh and with your brain ready to learn. Do 15 minutes of something active before you start revising.
 - Phase 1. Summarise all your course notes for each subject. Allow about five days per subject for this. Write up summary notes – the writing will help your brain remember it.
 - Phase 2. Summarise your summary. Get your notes down to 10 pages for each subject. Allow about 2½ days per subject for this. Making your brain work to condense your notes into 10 pages means you will really learn the subject in depth.
 - Take a two hour break in the middle of each day and devote an hour of that to exercise to refresh and relax your brain and let it process everything.
 - Phase 3. Practice past exam papers to make sure you are exam ready.
-

- Phase 4. Read your summary notes before the exam, and the 10 page summary prior to going in the exam hall.

Slide 65 Key Points 2

- Get to know how the exam works and how much time you must devote to each section and question. Stick to the time you have allowed yourself.
- Avoid talking to people about the exam beforehand (and after too). Don't cloud your brain with their thoughts. Just go in there and put your "thing" down.
- Use the three-minute Emotional Freedom Technique at the end of each day to help your brain organise and process everything it has learned, and to help tackle exam and revision stress.

Transition

Now plan out your revision and get studying. Follow the four phases and you'll do well.

Stop fretting. Just go and put your "thing" down. And remember, go for the marks, not for perfection

13. And In the End

Slide 66 And in the End

I finish by misquoting The Beatles:

And in the end
The marks you take
Are equal to
The marks you make

You get what I mean! Do the work and you'll get the marks. This revision strategy is not complicated. The structure provided ensures your brain will learn as much as it possibly can about the subjects; and the exercise time recommended means your brain can organise the material most efficiently.

I am sure that, if you apply the strategy and work hard, you will get a better grade than you might otherwise have got.

Slide 67 A Final Affirmation

To close, begin to prepare your mind for the revision period ahead. Close your eyes and listen to this final affirmation:

There is a powerful way to help you with revision. I know that you already know all that you need to know about how to do this, don't you?

So, sitting there comfortably, take a few relaxing breaths.

Somewhere out in front of you, in your mind's eye, is a white board. Something is written on that board, although you cannot read it yet.

You see that white board in your mind, don't you? Just nod to confirm, and to let yourself know that you are ready to control your revision and do well in your exams.

Good. Now on that board – which you still cannot read – is a date: a day, a month, a year. That is the date of your first exam. Read that date to yourself. This is your date; your time; your chance; your knowledge.

And now, everything else on that white board becomes clear. It is everything you need to know for that first exam: every fact, formula, diagram and quote. Everything that you will learn during your revision. Everything that will get you a good grade in the exam. This is your time; your chance; your knowledge. Take a few relaxing breaths and let it all sink in for a few moments.

And you do know, do you not, that you can and will do this? Just nod to confirm, and to let yourself know that you know deep inside you have already made that commitment, that internal decision, to do this work by that date.

And now let the white board fade away. Let your brain file it wherever it needs to. You can come back to it any time you wish.

And take a few moments now to relax and reflect on the commitment you have made, and the challenge you are now ready for.

Now you are ready to do well: better than you have ever done. And when you are ready, bring your awareness back to the room, and start planning your revision.

Slide 68

Thank you for your time. I hope this course will help you prepare for your exams.

Remember exams are not personal. They're a chore to be got through, that's all.

I'm Ross Maynard and I wish you the best of luck
