When Exams Attack: 6 Tips to Revamp Your Revision

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*Exams are just around the corner for many students. Many of us have a number of panic attacks around this time of year, every year. The guilt of procrastination and piles of books that have yet to be read looms over us. Memories of ploughing through hours of dreary revision sessions are often hidden away somewhere in the back of our minds.*

While we may lose confidence in our abilities and question if we can even go through with exams, it is important to remind ourselves of Allah’s subḥānahu wa ta'āla (glorified and exalted be He) words in Surat Al-Baqarah:

“Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity…”  [[Qur’an: Chapter 2, Verse 286](http://quran.com/2/286)]

Allah subḥānahu wa ta'āla (glorified and exalted be He) has given us this capacity, so we must use this knowledge to instill confidence in ourselves and go ahead with our revision. Sometimes, it is necessary to think about our previous study tactics to see how we can improve and start taking advantage of our abilities.

Revisit your study techniques

In my last five years at medical school, I have learnt to be versatile in my learning. I used to be a “read, make notes, and memorise” type of person. However, as you progress through academic life, you may find that you have more to learn and less time to read. Thus, to become more [productive in studying](http://productivemuslim.com/7-productive-steps-to-balance-your-study-schedule/#utm_source=ProM-Website&utm_medium=ProM-Website&utm_campaign=Website-Interlinking), finding an efficient approach is necessary.

Also, without keeping the mind interested, it becomes increasingly difficult to remain fully focused. **The more you enjoy the way you are revising, the more you are likely to remember the content you have covered.**

Again this year, some exams will take place during Ramadan. Be keen to make the most of the month by being creative and productive with your revision, and [trying alternative study strategies](http://productivemuslim.com/developing-productive-study-habits/#utm_source=ProM-Website&utm_medium=ProM-Website&utm_campaign=Website-Interlinking).

Here is a list of 6 tips to help you tackle this revision season:

1. Be an early bird

Revision has a tendency to cause sleeping patterns to go out of sync and nocturnal studying to commence. However, try your best to avoid this as it leads to an unhealthy sleeping pattern, which leads to no good.

It is narrated that the Prophet ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) made dua for our ummah, saying:

*“O Allah, bless my nation in their early mornings (i.e., what they do early in the morning).”* [[Ibn Majah](http://sunnah.com/urn/1265550)]

**The mind is able to focus better on tasks in the morning,** especially since social distractions are eliminated, as most people are still asleep. Also, a good night’s sleep is essential to maintain a healthy mind and body. So, before commencing studies, [make it a habit to sleep well](http://productivemuslim.com/sleep-and-productivity/#utm_source=ProM-Website&utm_medium=ProM-Website&utm_campaign=Website-Interlinking) and wake early for Fajr.

2. Draw word maps

Start by placing a broad term in the middle of a piece of paper or whiteboard. Brainstorm everything you know about that topic. Once you are done, you will have a number of stems that branch from this central term.

Then repeat the process by placing one of these branches as your central focus and jotting down everything you know about that particular topic or phrase. Interlink different branches to help you link up different ideas within the same subject.

This is a particularly good way to summarise what you have learnt at the end of a day of revision.

3. Use sticky notes

Place sticky notes with words, questions, and phrases around your house where you will come across them. Leave them everywhere, from your laptop, to your bedside table, to your mirror. Then each time you come across one, answer the question or explain the written term.

This will allow you to [recall information](http://productivemuslim.com/top-6-tips-to-strengthen-your-memory/#utm_source=ProM-Website&utm_medium=ProM-Website&utm_campaign=Website-Interlinking)when you are least expecting to do so, allowing you to evaluate what you genuinely remember and what you still need to work on. **Also, the more you recall, the more likely you are to remember what you have revised.**

4. Organise a quiz night

Group revision can be a great way to relax and revise at the same time. Produce a set of questions and get into teams to compete against each other. Make it fun by having prizes for the winners, which could include chocolates or stationery if you like. Other games can also be played, such as pictogram, hangman, or [your own crosswords](https://crosswordlabs.com/). Make sure you keep it all linked to your exam topics and related content.

If there are concepts which one person is stronger in than others, it would be the perfect situation to get some explanations and clarifications for topics you haven’t yet mastered.

5. Text smart

It is true that the closer our exams get, the more we [procrastinate](http://productivemuslim.com/lets-beat-procrastination-before-ramadan/#utm_source=ProM-Website&utm_medium=ProM-Website&utm_campaign=Website-Interlinking). For many of us, we would rather talk to our friends and forget the mounting pile of books we have left to read.

You can have the best of both worlds, by making a pact with your friends to send a fact related to your subject with each text message being sent. This way you can keep your mind actively learning while outside of your revision sessions.

6. Answer 10 questions before bed

Make a set of question flashcards. **Before going to bed, test yourself on 5-10 questions that should cover things you have not mastered yet.** On the days that you have only managed to do little revision, this is a quick way to add some in before your day ends.

The same flashcards can be used during your commute or when you are waiting for your dinner to be made. The key is to continuously test yourself to get yourself comfortable with the concept of questions and answering them accurately.

*I hope my tips are of help to all the students out there. Do not forget to continuously make dua for yourself and your peers. And if any one has any other study tips, please share them with us in the comments section!*

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[How to get an A Grade in the Final Exam?](http://muslimcommunityblog.blogspot.com/2010/06/how-to-get-a-grade-in-final-exam.html)

**Final exams are always a nice time to focus on the true exam of life.**

**1. In school, you can often redo your exam if you fail. In the hereafter, if one fails there is no going back.**

**2. In school, you often do not know what questions will be asked. In the hereafter, there are only 3 questions: Who is your Lord? What is your Deen? And who is this man who was sent to you? But the answers are answers you live by.**

**3. In school, we stay up at night to cram for the exam the next day. So too in Allah's exam, we should be staying up in night prayers.**

**4. In school, we pray and hope and work for an outstanding mark. So too should be our attitude towards Allah's exam.**

**5. In school, when we get a great mark, we erupt with happiness. So too will the believers erupt in happiness when they get their books in their right hands. Work for it.**

**6. In school, when we get a bad mark, sadness can be seen on our faces, and we dislike to face others. So too in the hereafter. Protect yourself from that.**

**7. During a school exam, you cannot ask anyone for help. In the hereafter, you can prepare from now to get assistance from Allah's Messenger, the Quran, and other ways of intercession.**

**8. In school, when exam time draws near, we banish distractions to focus on what is really important. In Allah's exam, isn't death within 1 heart beat?Banish distractions and focus.**

**9. In school, until exam results come out, we worry about the result. In Allah's exam, we don't know what our result will be, so we spend our days in hope and worry until the results come out.**

**What do you think? Do you have other reflections on exams?**

10 Tips to Earn Allah’s [swt] Tawfeeq

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We can make intentions, we can make plans, we can make duas, but we also need to have Allah’s “tawfeeq”: the key ingredient without which we cannot achieve anything in this life.

As Prophet Shu’aib [alyhis] told his people:  
“*And my [tawfeeq] success is not but through Allah. Upon him I have relied, and to Him I return*” [[Qur’an: Chapter 11, Verse 88](http://quran.com/11/88)].

**What is tawfeeq?**

**Tawfeeq is the special acceptance and blessing of Allah subḥānahu wa ta'āla (glorified and exalted be He) with which He enables us to achieve our aims.** It is His special help for the true believers who truly want to do something only for His pleasure.

Contrary to the traditional way of thinking, Allah’s tawfeeq is not something which will hit you by chance; rather, it is something you “acquire” by making conscious efforts towards it.

In this article, we will discuss some steps we can take to help us attain Allah’s tawfeeq, the key blessing which will open the doors of goodness and success for us, In sha Allah.

**1. Realize that you need Him**

The first and foremost thing to start with on this topic is to recognize that only Allah subḥānahu wa ta'āla (glorified and exalted be He) has the power to do everything. Of course He has given us the power to choose the right path and make efforts to walk on this path, but this doesn’t mean that we can accomplish things alone; we need His help *all the time.*

Accordingly, we should recognize our need for Him and be humble and submissive to Him, not just before starting our work, but at every step of the way, even after we have accomplished our work successfully. We should realize that it was only because of His help that we did it, and so there is no reason for us to be filled with pride. We need to remember that it is through His tawfeeq that we made this good choice because it is He subḥānahu wa ta'āla (glorified and exalted be He) who gave us the power of choice. Allah subḥānahu wa ta'āla (glorified and exalted be He) says in the Qur’an:

“*And you do not will except that Allah wills – Lord of the worlds*.” [[Qur’an: Chapter 81, Verse 29](http://quran.com/81/29)]

**2. Fix Your intentions**

You need to make the conscious decision and sincere intention to [make Allah’s [subḥānahu wa ta'āla (glorified and exalted be He)](http://productivemuslim.com/refine-your-intentions-for-productivity/) pleasure your main objective in life](http://productivemuslim.com/refine-your-intentions-for-productivity/), and then prove this intention through sincere efforts.

***Action*** ***Tip:***

In your day-to-day routine, ask yourself:

• Why am I doing this [any act that you embark on doing]?  
• Is this act of mine intended to please Allah subḥānahu wa ta'āla (glorified and exalted be He)? Is it for His sake or for something else?

If Allah’s subḥānahu wa ta'āla (glorified and exalted be He) pleasure is our true goal, then surely we will not crave people’s praise and attention, and we will not be so worried about their criticism either.

**3. Seek Allah’s subḥānahu wa ta'āla (glorified and exalted be He) help repeatedly**

Ask Allah subḥānahu wa ta'āla (glorified and exalted be He) to give you the desire and determination to accomplish good deeds. [Make dua a part of your life](http://productivemuslim.com/4-duaa-apps-barakah-into-your-life/). Make dua while sitting, standing, walking, cooking, and cleaning. Basically, make dua *all* the time. Keep asking Allah subḥānahu wa ta'āla (glorified and exalted be He) to give you tawfeeq to do things which He loves and which are of benefit to others.

**4. Engage sincerely with the Qur’an and hadith**

Make the study of the Qur’an and hadith a part of your life, just like eating and drinking. In fact, the need for your heart to listen and absorb Allah’s subḥānahu wa ta'āla (glorified and exalted be He) words is far greater than the need of your body for food and drink. Our souls are starving while we are totally absorbed in feeding our bodies, so we must make efforts to balance this equation. As your heart will receive its nourishment (through studying and contemplating the Qur’an and hadith), it will become stronger and more able to absorb the guidance of Allah subḥānahu wa ta'āla (glorified and exalted be He) and be motivated to act on it, In sha Allah.

**5. Find ways to benefit others**

Now this seems like working away from yourself, but in fact when you [extend your efforts towards the benefit of other people](http://productivemuslim.com/guide-choosing-profession-benefits-ummah/), Allah’s subḥānahu wa ta'āla (glorified and exalted be He) mercy will shower upon you like rain, and the doors of goodness will open for you like never before.

**Therefore, being unconditionally open-hearted, generous and forgiving is one big secret to getting Allah’s special tawfeeq to do amazing good deeds. The more you give others, the more you will be given.**

***Action Tip***:

We must ask ourselves those crucial questions:

• Does my heart carry any good feelings for others or am I usually self-centred?  
• Do I want others to succeed as well, or do I want Paradise only for myself?  
• When I have to share something with others -especially those whom I don’t like – do I think of it as an opportunity to win Allah’s subḥānahu wa ta'āla (glorified and exalted be He) pleasure, or do I think of it as a burden?  
• Am I good to people only because they are good to me? Or do I love them and care for them for the sake of Allah subḥānahu wa ta'āla (glorified and exalted be He)?

**6. Work on your taqwa**

Taqwa literally means to guard oneself against Allah’s subḥānahu wa ta'āla (glorified and exalted be He) displeasure. If we want to progress on the path of success, then it is absolutely essential that we[live a conscious life](http://productivemuslim.com/luqman-parenting-lessons-part4/) and always be careful not to do things which might displease Allah subḥānahu wa ta'āla (glorified and exalted be He).

Some might think that doing acts of goodness will automatically guard them against committing sins. *However, the truth is we need to make efforts in both directions simultaneously. We need to do good while exerting the necessary effort to avoid the evil.*

A very important thing to remember is not to fall into this trap: some people think that if they pray and read Qur’an then Allah subḥānahu wa ta'āla (glorified and exalted be He) will not be angry with them if they do a few sins here and there. This is a big mistake, and we must realize that no matter how pious we might appear to the world, Allah subḥānahu wa ta'āla (glorified and exalted be He) knows our reality. If we underestimate the sins we do in private, just because we might appear outwardly good to people, then we might not receive the tawfeeq of Allah subḥānahu wa ta'āla (glorified and exalted be He) to maintain the good deeds we’re doing and maintain our productivity.

“*Say, “Not equal are the evil and the good, although the abundance of evil might impress you.” So fear Allah , O you of understanding, that you may be successful*.” [[Qur’an: Chapter 5, Verse 100](http://quran.com/5/100)]

**7. Avoid useless activities**

If someone really desires to be productive for the sake of Allah subḥānahu wa ta'āla (glorified and exalted be He), then it is absolutely essential to spend time carefully and avoid all things that don’t bring any benefit.

Allah subḥānahu wa ta'āla (glorified and exalted be He) describes successful people as those who refrain from engaging in useless activities:

“*And they who turn away from ill speech*” [[Qur’an: Chapter 23, Verse 3](http://quran.com/23/3)]

The useless activities discussed here could be the superficial pleasures that most of us are involved in these days, which seem to have absorbed our time and hearts so much that we think we can’t live without them.

Can you identify those activities in your life?

It is a matter of choice. You can either be productive and use all your time and intellect for doing something positive with your time which will bring you benefit in this world and the next, or you can waste this time in useless temporary pleasures.

**8. Talk less, act more!**

One useless activity that has taken over many people’s time in our society is [talking too much without specific purpose or direction.](http://productivemuslim.com/practical-tips-to-stop-wasting-time-in-gossip/)

The fact is that if we don’t guard our speech, then we fall into the danger of indulging in backbiting, slandering, making fun of others or discussing others’ private matters, etc.

Even if you can somehow guard yourself against all this evil, you still lose precious time which cannot be brought back at any price. This creates a barrier between you and the opportunities of earning Allah’s subḥānahu wa ta'āla (glorified and exalted be He) tawfeeq and doing good deeds.

So, we should act on the following hadith of the Prophet ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him):

“*He who believes in Allah and the Last Day must either speak good or remain silent.*” [[Muslim](http://sunnah.com/riyadussaliheen/18/1)]

**9. Seize opportunities that come your way**

One big reason which keeps us behind in terms of good deeds is that when Allah subḥānahu wa ta'āla (glorified and exalted be He) gives us opportunities, sometimes, we don’t take them. Rather, we keep delaying things and think that we can do this or that later when it will be more convenient. This is because we have unrealistic hopes and we do not realize that our time is running out.

Therefore, one sure way to attain Allah’s subḥānahu wa ta'āla (glorified and exalted be He) tawfeeq is to always seize the opportunity whenever you get the chance to do a good deed. By doing that, you will be proving that you are grateful to Allah subḥānahu wa ta'āla (glorified and exalted be He) for giving you the opportunity to do something positive in your life. And Allah subḥānahu wa ta'āla (glorified and exalted be He) has promised that if we are grateful He will bless us even more:

“*‘If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor]*” [[Qur’an: Chapter 14, Verse 7](http://quran.com/14/7)]

**10. Get ready to work hard!**

We might have dreams to reach the top of the mountain, but what will actually take us there is ***constant hard work***!

Whoever wishes to [win Allah’s [subḥānahu wa ta'āla (glorified and exalted be He)](http://productivemuslim.com/work-for-allahs-sake-part1/) pleasure](http://productivemuslim.com/work-for-allahs-sake-part1/) and reach the higher levels of Paradise must be prepared to work hard.

Most of us dream of doing amazing things for the sake of Allah subḥānahu wa ta'āla (glorified and exalted be He) but we don’t get up to turn them into a reality.

Why? Because we don’t want to give up our comfort and pleasures, then we keep wondering why Allah subḥānahu wa ta'āla (glorified and exalted be He) is not listening to our duas.

Allah subḥānahu wa ta'āla (glorified and exalted be He) gives tawfeeq to those who really mean what they say, those who struggle to please Him, those who work hard to find the way to do things which He loves.

“*And those who strive for Us – We will surely guide them to Our ways. And indeed, Allah is with the doers of good*” [[Qur’an: Chapter 29, Verse 69](http://quran.com/29/69)]

It is up to us to decide how much we truly want to succeed in this test of life. May Allah subḥānahu wa ta'āla (glorified and exalted be He) help us earn the true desire and determination to make the best out of our short life journey, so that we can attain the glorious endless success of the Hereafter, Ameen!

W*hat other tips would you say help you earn Allah’s tawfeeq? Are there stories you can share that reflect the*tawfeeq of Allah subḥānahu wa ta'āla (glorified and exalted be He) for doing good?

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