

Ways we struggle



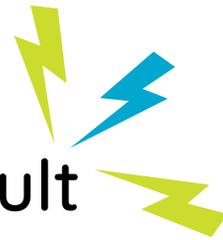
Too much or too little?

We all know that too much of something can cause stress. But did you know too little of something can be stressful?

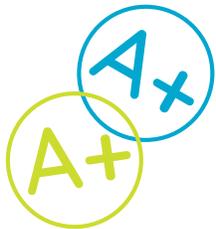
It's a tricky thing, because it's often hard to tell whether we're doing too much or too little.

We're not saying that if you're stressed, it means you're taking it too easy. There are four basic ways doing work can make us stressed:

The work is too difficult



The work is too easy



You're doing too little



You're doing too much



Ways we struggle

The work is too difficult. This is pretty simple - we are trying to tackle something too tricky for us. If you can't explain what you've been studying to someone, then it's a sign what you're doing may be too tricky. **The solution here is to move backwards. Go to the previous chapter or speak to someone about what to do next.**

The work is too easy. If you're burning through tasks, this can leave you unsatisfied, and often put you off doing more studying. This type of stress is sneaky, because we can actually feel pretty good from completing a bunch of questions. But pretty soon, you become bored. **If you're always getting questions right, go for a more challenging topic.**

You're doing too little. Maybe you're focusing on the perfect task, but only studying for a few minutes at a time. This is very common, especially when we get distracted. We sit down to study for an hour, play with our phones for most of it, and pat ourselves on the back when the hour is up! **It's tough to admit to yourself that you aren't spending enough time studying, but that's why limiting distractions is the way to go. Put yourself in a quiet room, and stay away from screens.**

You're doing too much. It's tempting to put off studying and tell yourself "I'll just sit down at the weekend for a few hours and study then". This doesn't work, and when we try, it can really make us feel terrible. We don't want to dread study time. **The solution is to study little and often - 20 to 30 minutes a day.**

How do I know I'm struggling?

You must remember that a little struggle is normal, but too much is not good. Never give up - talk to someone if you think you are struggling.

You're upset

When we're studying something we don't understand, we get upset. Getting upset is a sign that we should talk to someone about our studying.

You're in pain

Studying in bad conditions - on the go, in the car, in loud places, etc., can cause us pain. Whether it's bad posture or headaches from eye strain, you must be in a quiet, calm and well-lit place, preferably during daytime.

If you are at all worried, talk to a medical professional.



You're confused

It's normal to be a bit confused when we are studying - so long as you know what you're confused about.

If you know what the challenge is, you can overcome it. But when you're reading pages and pages of text and not understanding (or remembering) it, it's time to speak to someone.

Remember

Studying should not be painful or upsetting. It's just like exercise - you might feel tired, but you shouldn't be in pain..

Avoiding Struggle

Breathe

Be calm, be prepared. Did you know that if you Google 'Breathing Exercise', Google will lead you through a basic, calming breathing lesson? This exercise has you breathe in for 4 seconds, and breathe out for 4 seconds.



Be prepared



Plan what you will study. You can find out how to plan a study timetable in our 'Learning from Home' guide. If you're jumping in to study sessions without a plan, you're not going to have a good time!

After studying, do something different



You've just spent a bunch of time sitting and studying. **Do not** follow this up with another few hours of sitting and looking at screens. Get up and do something completely different - walk outside, listen to music, or make something to eat.

Watching TV or playing games is fine, but **do not** immediately move on to these things after studying. You need to give yourself time to transition out of study-mode.

Remember when we said doing too little is stressful? Doing too much of the same thing - sitting, reading, not moving - can stress us out, even if we don't feel stressed. Do something different after studying.



The Golden Rule

This is the Golden Rule when it comes to struggling:

If you can look at the work you've done at the end of a study session and **honestly** say you've tried your hardest, then all is well.

No one can ask for more. If you still feel a bit down, you can come back to your studying the next day.

It's **okay** to not do as well as some days. You might be acing everything one day, then struggling a lot the next. So long as you can honestly say you've tried your best, then put the pen down, and go relax.



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