



**Heathfield**  
Community College and Sixth Form

# Spaced Practice and Interleaving



# Recap

1. Retrieval works (whether its flashcards, mindmaps, tests – make sure this is done from memory)
2. Making mistakes is to be expected. And even a good indicator that you're pushing yourself. Just make sure you correct and re-practise any mistakes asap.
3. Be aware of the risk of unconscious procrastination. When faced with challenging tasks, we can easily find ourselves adopting sophisticated avoidance strategies....such as spending way too much time making the flash cards in the first place or creating beautifully illustrated mind maps!

# What is Spaced Practice?

**What we know:** Retrieval works best.

You attempt to retrieve concepts from memory; continue attempting to retrieve it until you can get it right in a single session. So...

If you get it wrong, restudy it, and try and retrieve it again.

And then you have to come back to it, say, two days later, and do the same again.

*[If you cannot come up with it relatively quickly, then it is probably not going to happen. It is easier to go immediately to restudy if you cannot retrieve the information]*

Even if you don't do anything else after this point, you will still forget it, So... You need to go back and do it again and again.

# What is Interleaving?

Closely linked to 'Spacing' is the concept of 'Interleaving'.

Whereas **spacing is about how long you leave between revision sessions, interleaving is about what you do with your time.**

When students dedicate a whole day to one subject (i.e. 'On Monday I will do Chemistry and on Tuesday I will do French') this is known as Blocking.

Interleaving is when you mix these up and **do a bit of both on each day.**

*Blocking works better if the test is immediately after,*

Once the test is **more than one day away** then the **interleaving has shown students perform over three times better.**

# How spaced should spaced practice be....

## Step 1

When you have a long time until the exam keep the first space relatively short (a few days),

- then wait a week,
- then a month,
- after a while, it becomes semi-permanent knowledge

## Step 2

With about a week to go...

Space the critical content two or three times in that time and then review the day before (DO NOT be cramming all night).

## Step 3

The night before:

Use the last session that day to review all the material again.

Then focus on the top tips for the night before an exam.

# How to Apply

## One week to go

Do lots of past papers and quizzes. This is one of the most effective revision techniques possible. It helps improve memory, reduce nerves and boosts confidence.

Still rotate topics

## The Night before

This is no time for blocking or cramming.



The day before can be a time for some short term memory retention but....

## The Night before

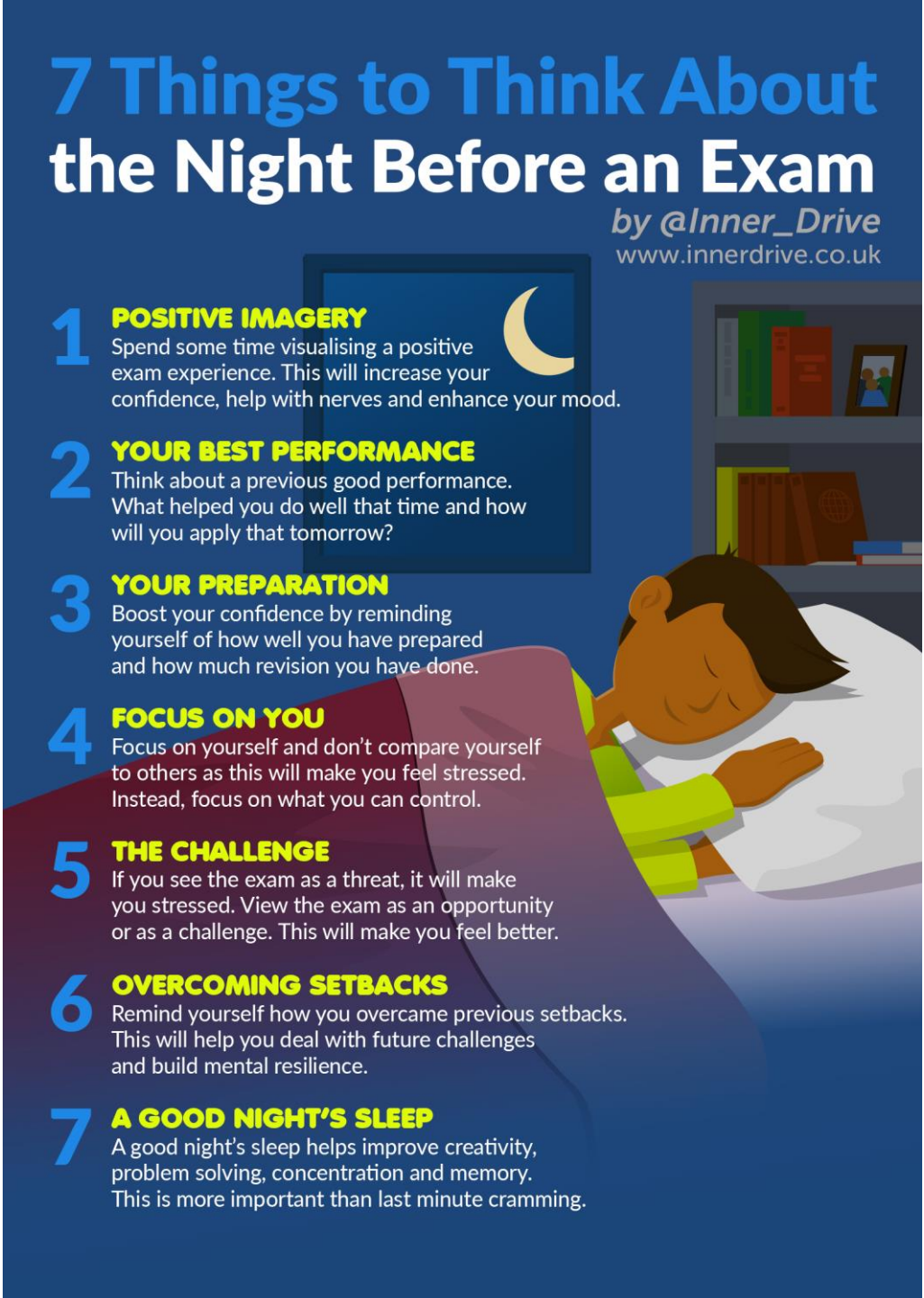
Pack your bag for the next day. This is far less stressful than doing it the morning of the exam. Do a full equipment check and double check you have everything you will need. Get some sleep.....

# Summary: How to use Spacing & Interleaving

- Avoid blocking large sections of time on one subject (“cramming”): break it up and “interleave” subjects or topics.
- Revisit (space) topics regularly to allow your self to forget and then re-remember.
- Space the frequency of the revisiting depending on the closeness of the exam.
- Retrieval: retrieval: retrieval.

# 7 Things to Think About the Night Before an Exam

by @Inner\_Drive  
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- 1 POSITIVE IMAGERY**  
Spend some time visualising a positive exam experience. This will increase your confidence, help with nerves and enhance your mood.
  - 2 YOUR BEST PERFORMANCE**  
Think about a previous good performance. What helped you do well that time and how will you apply that tomorrow?
  - 3 YOUR PREPARATION**  
Boost your confidence by reminding yourself of how well you have prepared and how much revision you have done.
  - 4 FOCUS ON YOU**  
Focus on yourself and don't compare yourself to others as this will make you feel stressed. Instead, focus on what you can control.
  - 5 THE CHALLENGE**  
If you see the exam as a threat, it will make you stressed. View the exam as an opportunity or as a challenge. This will make you feel better.
  - 6 OVERCOMING SETBACKS**  
Remind yourself how you overcame previous setbacks. This will help you deal with future challenges and build mental resilience.
  - 7 A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP**  
A good night's sleep helps improve creativity, problem solving, concentration and memory. This is more important than last minute cramming.