• **Expect the presence of stress hormones;** we need them to be attentive and ready for the challenge of exams. However, if stress stays around for long periods, you can do something about it. See also card 1.

• **Physical exercise** is often one of the first victims of the exam period. Keep going to the gym, walking, cycling etc. Exercise helps to relax tense muscles, think more clearly and provides time when you are not concentrating completely on exams. It doesn’t have to be strenuous; try walking vigorously from your accommodation to university.

• **Get as much sleep** as you can. Try to resist working late into the night fearing there are not enough hours in the day to study effectively. It is important to protect your sleep hours (6–8 per night) as this is when the body regenerates. Leave space between revising and going to bed so you don’t take exam pressures with you. Have some time for yourself before going to bed e.g. talk to friends, have a bath, use relaxation techniques.

• **Relaxation;** finding a relaxation technique that works for you can be a powerful way to manage stress. Try the download on our website. This takes 15 minutes and if used once or twice a day, can give a cumulative sense of calm and wellbeing.

• **Spend time on interests not related to course or exams;** allow yourself a night out with friends or a few hours at the weekend to relax. This will allow you to realise there is life beyond exams and help you return to study feeling more refreshed.
• **Reward yourself;** exam preparation is tough — give yourself a reward every few days e.g. watch your favourite soap opera, eat your favourite food — try including it as a part of your revision timetable!

• **Create Support Networks;** take time out to talk with friends and family. Arrange to meet in natural breaks such as during lunchtimes or evening meals. Agree to not talk about exams. This will allow you to think about other concerns and interests.

• **Know how you study best** and plan accordingly. Be honest and realistic about how long you can effectively concentrate for e.g. 45–60 mins and allow short (10–15 mins) breaks between each period of study. This helps build a ‘wall of knowledge’ with each study period being a brick in the wall.

• **Time Management Skills;** training available from the Skills Centre [www.skillscentre.leeds.ac.uk](http://www.skillscentre.leeds.ac.uk).

• **Avoid large quantities of alcohol** and caffeine as a means of dealing with stress or keeping going.

• **Eat a good diet;** often during stressful periods we are tempted to reach for the fast food like pizzas, chips and chocolate. Your body, however, needs the restorative power of proteins, carbohydrates, vitamins and fibre. What better fast food is there than fruit or pasta? See card 7.