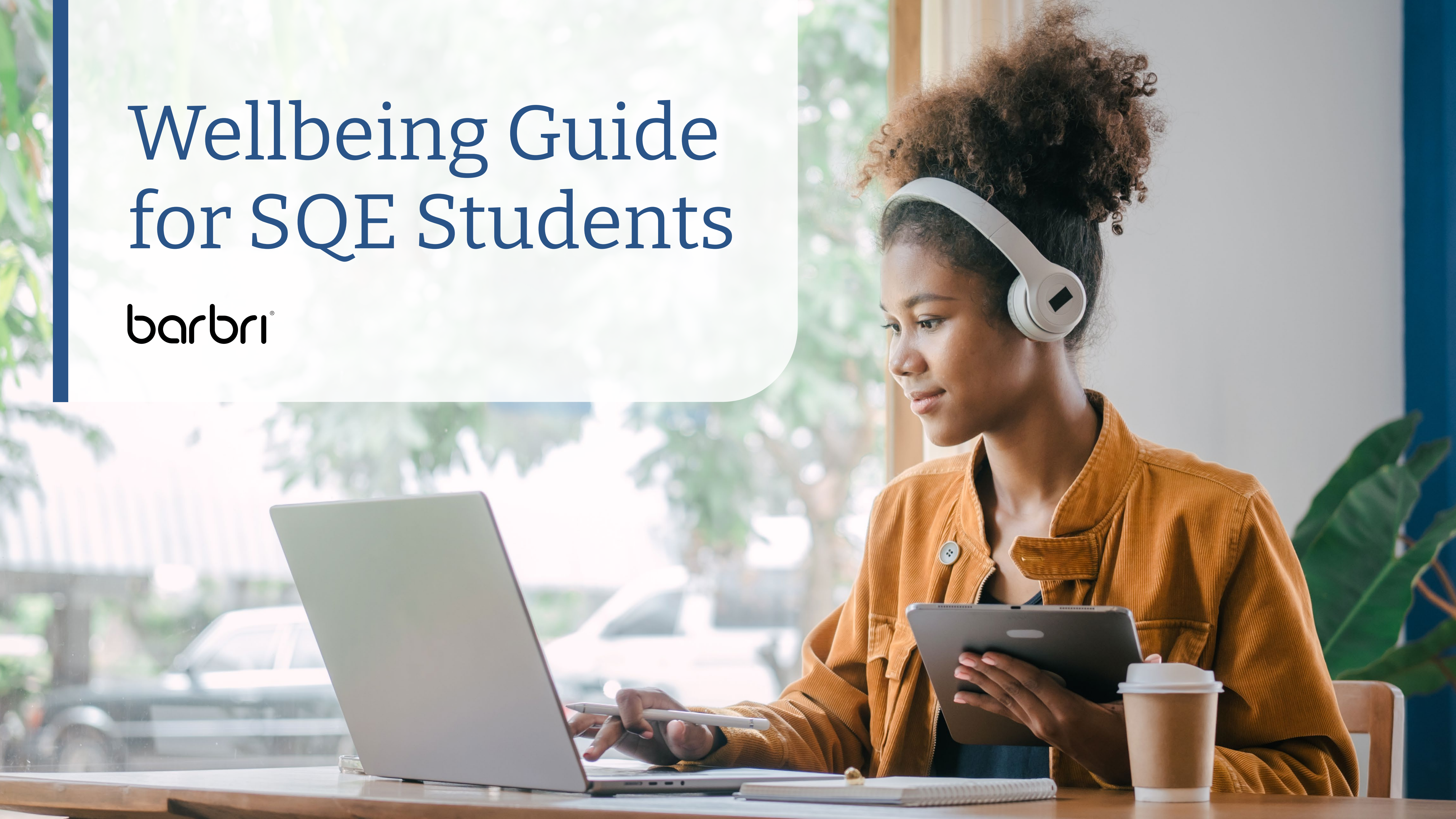


Wellbeing Guide for SQE Students

barbri®



Welcome to a balanced, positive and productive time studying for the SQE

The SQE is a huge undertaking – with huge rewards.

By looking at your daily routine – sleep, nutrition, exercise, stress management – you will be in a better position to face the SQE exam, and mentally nail it. In this guide, we share some great advice from experts, learning coaches and former students about keeping you fit, mentally and physically.



The SQE roadmap

If you're reading this, you're an overachiever. You're a perfectionist, you're ambitious and you go for gold. **We see you!**

Let us tell you something about the SQE. It's probably different to anything you've done before, and it can be... hard. But with the right academic preparation and support (we're rather good at that!) and mental preparation (that's where you come in), we're going to get you across the finish line.

Along your SQE journey, you may encounter several peak times – periods when you're under additional pressure and may need to be especially kind to yourself.

These events don't have to throw you off course, having a few strategies in place will help you cope with the rigours of study, some bumps in the road, and everything else life throws at you.



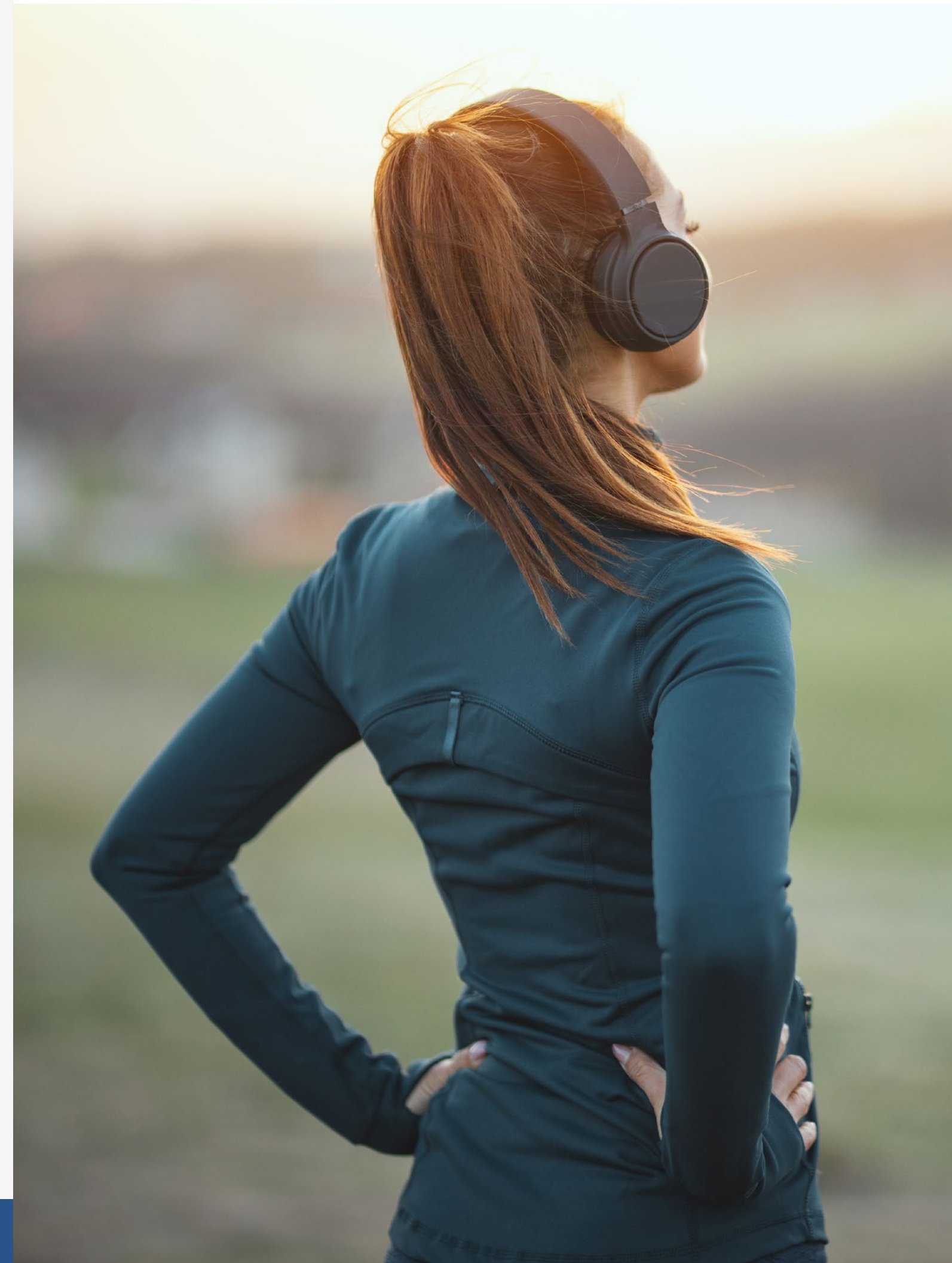
SECTION 1

Mental Wellbeing

Integrate these simple techniques into your daily routine to help manage stress effectively and improve your overall wellbeing.

Meditation and mindfulness

Mindfulness involves being fully present in the moment and observing your thoughts and feelings without judgment. It helps reduce stress by enhancing awareness and promoting relaxation. Practising meditation can help you to become more mindful in everyday life.



Get started

Set aside a few minutes daily to focus on your breathing, bodily sensations and surroundings. You can do this while walking, commuting, before getting up in the mornings. Simply unplug the headphones, be still and observe without trying to change anything.

There are many meditation techniques: one involves relaxing and focusing the mind on a single mantra, blocking out all distractions; another allows you to follow your mind as it wanders, and then actively bringing it back. Start with 5-10 minutes per day and increase the amount of time you spend meditating every day as you become more comfortable.

Use an app or website to help you get started.

Headspace

Offers guided mindfulness practices for beginners and advanced users.

[View now](#)

Mindful

Provides articles, tips and guided meditations to help cultivate mindfulness.

[View now](#)

Calm

Features guided meditations, sleep stories, and music to promote relaxation.

[View now](#)

Insight Timer

Offers a wide range of free guided meditations and talks by meditation teachers.

[View now](#)

Positive Psychology

Article: 5 Differences Between Mindfulness and Meditation

[View now](#)



Breathing exercises

Deep breathing exercises help activate the parasympathetic nervous system, reducing stress and promoting relaxation.

Cultivate a habit of doing breathing exercises as part of your daily routine; it's particularly helpful if you're in a stressful situation and feeling anxious or panicky.

Get started

For daily exercises, stand up, sit in a chair with good back support, or lie on your bed or a yoga mat on the floor.

Breathing to manage stressful situations (e.g. during an exam)

Practice the 4-7-8 breathing technique

- Inhale deeply...
- Hold your breath...
- Exhale slowly...
- Repeat several times

It really has a very calming effect, try it!



Resources

Breathe2Relax

Provides instructions and exercises for deep breathing to reduce stress.

[View now](#)

NHS Breathing Exercises

Offers simple breathing exercises for stress relief.

[View now](#)

Journalling

Journalling allows you to express your thoughts and emotions, helping to process and release stress. You can also see it as a “morning diary”, or a “mourning diary”, however you feel.

Get started

Set aside a few minutes each day to write about your thoughts, feelings, and experiences. Focus on gratitude and positive experiences to foster a sense of wellbeing. If you prefer not to write, you can always draw in your journal as a way to express yourself.

Resources:

Day One Journal

A digital journalling app that allows you to record thoughts and experiences with ease.

[View now](#)

The Greater Good Science Center

Offers tips on journalling for stress relief and articles on the benefits of expressive writing.

[View now](#)

Positive self-talk

Positive self-talk is a powerful tool for managing your SQE study and exam stress. It helps to boost your confidence and reduces anxiety by shifting the focus away from fear of failure. It also encourages a growth mindset, viewing challenges as opportunities to learn rather than obstacles.

By regularly practising self-affirmations, you can improve your resilience, motivation and self-esteem, ultimately enhancing your academic performance and your outlook.

Get started

Consciously replace negative thoughts with encouraging and supportive statements. When feeling overwhelmed, remind yourself of past successes and affirm your abilities with phrases like “I can do this” or “I am well-prepared”.

Resources:

ThinkUp

This app lets you record your affirmations in your own voice and play them back to help reinforce positive self-talk.

[View now](#)

Affirmation Pod

A podcast dedicated to helping you develop a positive mindset through guided affirmations and self-talk.

[View now](#)

IAm

Provides daily affirmations and reminders to help you develop a positive mindset and encourage self-love.

[View now](#)

Simple Habit

A meditation and mindfulness app that includes guided affirmations and positive self-talk exercises.

[View now](#)

Healthy goal-setting

For any study programme to work, you will need to create a study plan you can stick to, and then set some goals to enable you to dedicate time for your studies every day. Luckily, BARBRI's Personal Study Plan (PSP) takes the hassle out of having to create your own study schedule – just block out the times you're not available in the calendar, and the PSP will take care of your schedule, all you need to do is follow the plan. And this is the crucial part, as following the plan will help to ensure you have enough time left to do revision and mock exams!

Get started

Look at your daily and weekly routine, set some goals and make adjustments to allow you to dedicate a certain amount of hours every week, whether that's getting up an hour earlier, skipping the binge-watching or scrolling at night, or asking a family member to help look after the kids for a few hours every week.

App: Habitica

A gamified task manager that rewards you for completing tasks and achieving goals.

[View now](#)



Reward yourself

Rewarding yourself for achieving goals and milestones, both big and small, is essential for maintaining motivation and reinforcing positive habits. Celebrating achievements acknowledges your hard work and provides a sense of accomplishment, encouraging continued effort and focus.

Get started

1. **Set clear milestones:** For instance, completing a certain number of modules, or days of studying.
2. **Choose meaningful rewards:** Select rewards that genuinely motivate you, such as a treat, taking a day off or buying something special.

Ask for help

Asking for help is crucial when balancing studies with other responsibilities, such as work or childcare. It allows you to manage stress effectively and focus on your priorities.

Don't suffer in silence – if you need support or emergency intervention, please do reach out.

Get started

- Ask your employer for a study day or two, or reduced hours to support you while you study for the SQE.
- We're here to help. Contact your BARBRI Learning Coach if you need to talk and get reassurance about your progress, or how to get back on track.
- Contact our Mental Health First Aiders if your mental health is taking a knock.
- Contact our external partners if you need urgent help or intervention.
- Click here for details and contacts:

Wellbeing & Mental Health Support



Cut out and keep: Need urgent help?


If you need mental health support:

 LawCare

 0800 279 6888

 Whats Up?

 MIND

 0300 123 3393

 Student Space

 Rethink Mental Health

In an emergency...

 Emergency ambulance or police: 999


 Non-emergency police services: 101

 101

 Samaritans

 116 123

 Domestic Violence helpline

 0808 200 0247 or
0808 802 9999

 Rape Crisis Centre

SECTION 2

Physical Wellbeing

Exercise

Physical activity is a powerful tool for managing stress and promoting wellbeing. It helps to regulate stress hormones like adrenaline and cortisol, while also boosting the production of endorphins, our natural mood enhancers. Regular exercise can lead to improved sleep, increased energy levels, and a greater sense of calm.



Get started

To get started, choose activities you enjoy, such as walking, cycling, dancing, football, climbing, swimming, running, yoga or going to the gym. Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic exercise per week. Start slowly, gradually increasing the intensity and duration of your workouts as your fitness improves.

Resources

 **NHS Coach to 5K**

The free app helps you work up towards running 5km in just 9 weeks.

 **Fiit**

The free plan offers unlimited access to all group classes.

 **Nike Training Club**

Offers free workouts and training programs for various fitness levels.

 **Yoga with Adriene**

Provides free yoga videos suitable for all levels, focusing on stress relief and relaxation.

Stretching breaks

Stretching offers numerous benefits for students who spend long hours studying in front of screens. It helps alleviate muscle tension, improve posture, and increase blood circulation, which can combat the physical discomfort associated with prolonged sitting and screentime. Stretching can also reduce stress and improve focus by providing a mental break, allowing you to return to your studies refreshed and more alert.

Get started

Take short breaks every hour to stand up and stretch your neck, shoulders, back and legs. Incorporate simple stretches like neck rolls, shoulder shrugs, and seated twists to relieve tension.

Resources

StretchIt

Offers guided stretching routines tailored to different needs.

[View now](#)

Darebee

Provides free workout and stretching guides.

[View now](#)

Online Guide: Healthline Stretching Guide

Offers detailed descriptions and images of effective stretches.

[View now](#)

Nutrition

Healthy eating is crucial for students, as a balanced diet provides sustained energy and enhances focus and cognitive function.

To maintain optimal nutrition, aim for a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins and healthy fats. These foods help regulate blood sugar levels, preventing energy crashes and promoting steady concentration throughout the day. Try to minimise ultra-processed foods (UPF) - they contain unfamiliar ingredients you won't have in your kitchen cupboard which our bodies have not evolved to digest and can cause short-term cravings, blood-sugar spikes, and long-term inflammation.

Get started

Plan your meals in advance to ensure a variety of nutrients. Include simple meals like grilled chicken with quinoa and roasted vegetables, or a chickpea salad with leafy greens and a vinaigrette. Keep healthy snacks on hand, such as nuts, yogurt, fruit or hummus with carrots to curb hunger and avoid cravings for unhealthy snacks.



Choose MyPlate

Offers dietary guidelines and resources for balanced eating.

[View now](#)

MyFitnessPal

This app tracks nutritional intake and helps with meal planning.

[View now](#)

Mind Over Munch

This YouTube channel features quick and healthy meal prep ideas.

[View now](#)

Hydration

Staying hydrated is essential when studying for long hours, as it helps maintain focus, cognitive function and energy levels. Dehydration can lead to fatigue, headaches and difficulty concentrating, hindering academic performance.

Get started

- To stay hydrated, aim to drink at least 8 to 10 cups of water daily, and more if you're active.
- Keep a reusable water bottle nearby and set reminders to drink regularly.
- Add flavour to your water with slices of lemon or cucumber to make it more appealing.
- Limit caffeine and sugary drinks, which can contribute to dehydration.

Resources

WaterMinder

This app tracks daily water intake.

[View now](#)

British Nutrition Foundation

Provides hydration guidelines and top tips to stay hydrated.

[View now](#)

Sleep

Good sleep is vital in general but especially during stressful times as it directly affects your cognitive functions such as concentration, memory and problem-solving abilities. Consistently getting 7 to 9 hours of quality sleep enhances learning and academic performance. Sleep deprivation, on the other hand, can lead to decreased focus, mood swings and impaired decision-making.

Get started

- **Establish a routine:** Go to bed and wake up at the same time every day to regulate your internal clock.
- **Create a sleep-friendly environment:** Keep your bedroom cool, dark and quiet, and invest in a comfortable mattress and pillows.
- **Limit screentime:** Avoid screens at least an hour before bed to reduce exposure to blue light, which can disrupt sleep patterns.
- **Avoid caffeine and heavy meals:** Steer clear of caffeine and large meals before bedtime to prevent sleep disturbances.

Resources

Sleep Cycle

Tracks sleep patterns and provides insights for improvement.

[View now](#)

National Sleep Foundation

Offers tips and research on sleep health.

[View now](#)

SECTION 3

Social Wellbeing

Staying connected

Staying connected with friends and family is essential for maintaining mental wellbeing and managing stress, especially when you're busy with studies. These social interactions provide emotional support, reduce feelings of isolation, and help to balance the pressures of academic life. This could include a cuddle with your pet cat or dog too. Regularly engaging with loved ones can improve mood, enhance motivation, and offer valuable breaks from studying.



Get started

- **Schedule social time:** Set aside specific times each week for calls, video chats or social activities to ensure you stay connected.
- **Combine activities:** Invite a friend or family member to join you in study breaks or during mealtimes for brief, enjoyable interactions.

Keeping balance

Maintaining a balance between non-academic activities and focused study time is crucial for overall wellbeing and academic success. Engaging in hobbies and relaxation helps to reduce stress, prevent burnout and enhance cognitive function. However, knowing when to prioritise studying over leisure activities ensures that you meet your academic goals effectively.

Get started

- **Create a schedule:** Allocate specific times for both study and relaxation. Use tools like Google Calendar to plan your week and set reminders.
- **Set boundaries:** Recognise when it's time to say no to social activities or distractions to concentrate on studying. Establish clear study goals and limits.

Forest

Helps you stay focused by growing virtual trees when you avoid distractions.

[View now](#)

Support networks

Joining study groups is highly beneficial when preparing for a big exam. These platforms provide diverse perspectives, enhance understanding through collaborative learning, and offer moral support during stressful times. Engaging with peers helps clarify difficult concepts and stay motivated. By participating in study groups, you can gain valuable insights, reduce exam stress, and enhance your overall study efficiency.

Get started

- **Join your study group on Whatsapp:** Here you can discuss your progress and motivate others to keep going.
- **Participate in workshops and strategy sessions:** Attend these sessions regularly, contribute to discussions and ask questions to maximise your understanding.



SECTION 4

Practical Tips for Exam Day & Beyond

How to prepare

- The booking confirmation email that was sent to you will contain all the information you need for exam day. Also check the [SRA website](#) for details about exam day, including what to bring and what to expect.
- You will need to check in your personal possessions and leave them in secure lockers, so only bring a small bag.
- Remember to bring a water bottle and lunch or snacks, which you can enjoy in your break. This is not allowed in the assessment room.
- [Here is a list](#) of “comfort” and medical items you’re allowed to take into the PearsonVUE exam centres.
- Be early so you have enough time to get settled in and do the ID and security checks.

During the exam

- Start with the questions you’re confident in, then return to the ones you need more time to consider.
- Read the questions very carefully, as well as each of the options.
- Keep time at the end to **review your answers**.
- **Keep a cool head.** If you don’t know an answer, and the next, and the next, just keep going. Don’t get thrown by it. If you become flustered, your mind may start to flail about and what you need is calm, focus and confidence.
- Remember, this is not school or university. **No-one will get 100%.** You will get several questions wrong. You just need to pass.
- If you become panicky, take a moment to do breathing exercises to calm your heart rate and practise positive self-talk. **You’ve got this!**

After the exam

Congratulations!

You've sat one of the hardest exams you'll ever face. It's common to feel deflated after the exams. After the massive build-up of adrenaline, it's all over. It was probably difficult and you're not sure if you're going pass. We see this a lot, even among our top students who pass in the first quintile. But you're going to wait several weeks for the results and there's no point falling into despair and starting to catastrophise. Get out and reclaim all the time you lost during your studies and look after yourself.

Get started:

- Rest!
- Take your mind off things by getting back into the hobby you had to give up while you were studying, and reconnecting with your wider group of friends.



Conclusion

You've got this!

If it seems hard, it's because it is! You're not alone. But you can do this, like thousands of other successful SQE passers. Look after yourself, engage with the PSP, your learning coaches and tutors and stay resilient – **you will get there!**

For more wellbeing tips and support,
please follow BARBRI on social:

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