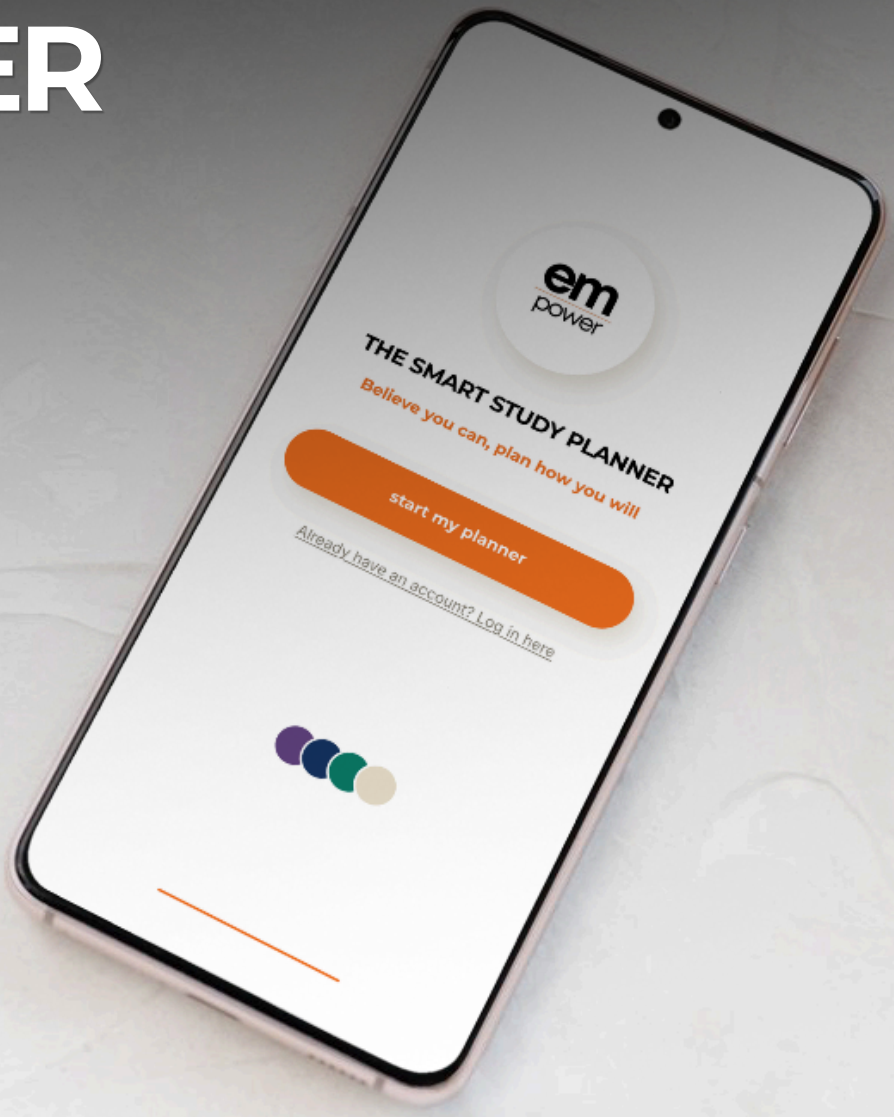
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A guide to

THE SMART STUDY PLANNER



Congratulations

You made the smart move to download the Smart Study Planner (SSP).

This planner was designed to take away the pain of creating a study plan, giving you more time to do what you need to do. And to do it well.

To help you navigate the SSP, I created this guide. It's easy and quick, and will really help you plan better, so you can do better.

Enjoy, and kindly share your experience with me. You can email me on ebrahim@empowermint.co.za

Ebrahim

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The planning problem no one talks about:

Sitting down to study is hard enough. But sitting down and actually knowing where to start — which subject, which topic, for how long — is something most learners have never been taught to do. So they default to studying whatever is most comfortable, whatever feels least threatening. They avoid the hard subjects. They leave them too late. And when exam day comes, they're not ready.

What the SSP does:

- It builds each learner a personal daily study plan automatically — based on their own subjects, their own confidence levels, and their own exam dates.
- It prioritises the weakest subjects first. The subjects closest to their exam date get the most attention.
- It updates every single day — so the plan always reflects where the learner actually is, not where they were last week.
- It takes two minutes to set up. Then it runs itself.

Who is it for?

- School learners
- University and college students
- Anyone studying for professional qualifications or certifications
- Anyone with exams coming up who doesn't know where to start

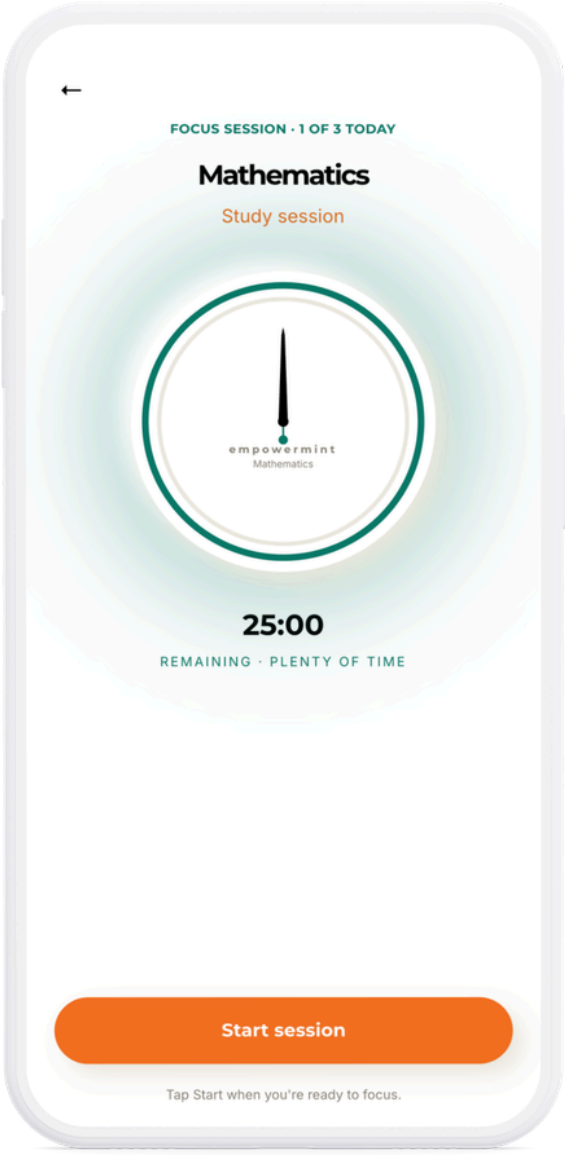
Why Is Each Study Session Only 25 Minutes?

This is the most common question I get from learners and parents. The answer is rooted in how the human brain actually works — and it might change the way you think about studying forever.

The Problem With Long Study Sessions

Most learners sit down to study and try to power through for 2 or 3 hours at a stretch. Here's what actually happens to their brain during that time:

- **Minutes 0–20:** Focus is high. Information is being processed and absorbed well.
- **Minutes 20–45:** Concentration begins to drop. The mind starts to wander. Retention falls significantly.
- **Minutes 45+:** The brain is fatigued. New information is barely being retained. The learner is going through the motions, not actually learning.



Studying for 3 hours straight often produces less actual learning than 3 focused 25-minute sessions with proper breaks in between. This is not an opinion — it is backed by decades of cognitive science research.

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The Pomodoro Technique

The 25-minute session is based on the Pomodoro Technique, developed by Francesco Cirillo in the late 1980s and validated by decades of research in learning science. The core principle is simple:

> Work with intense, undivided focus for 25 minutes. Then take a short break. Repeat. This cycle aligns with the brain's natural attention rhythms and maximises the quality of information retention.

The science behind why this works:

- The human brain can maintain peak focus for roughly 20–25 minutes before neural fatigue begins to set in.

- Sustained attention:
  - Short, focused sessions force the brain to actively engage with material rather than passively re-reading it.

- Active recall:
  - Multiple shorter sessions spread across days produce far stronger long-term memory than one long session close to the exam.The spacing effect

- Reduced anxiety:
  - A 25-minute commitment is psychologically manageable. A 3-hour marathon creates dread and procrastination before it even starts.

The SSP's focus timer

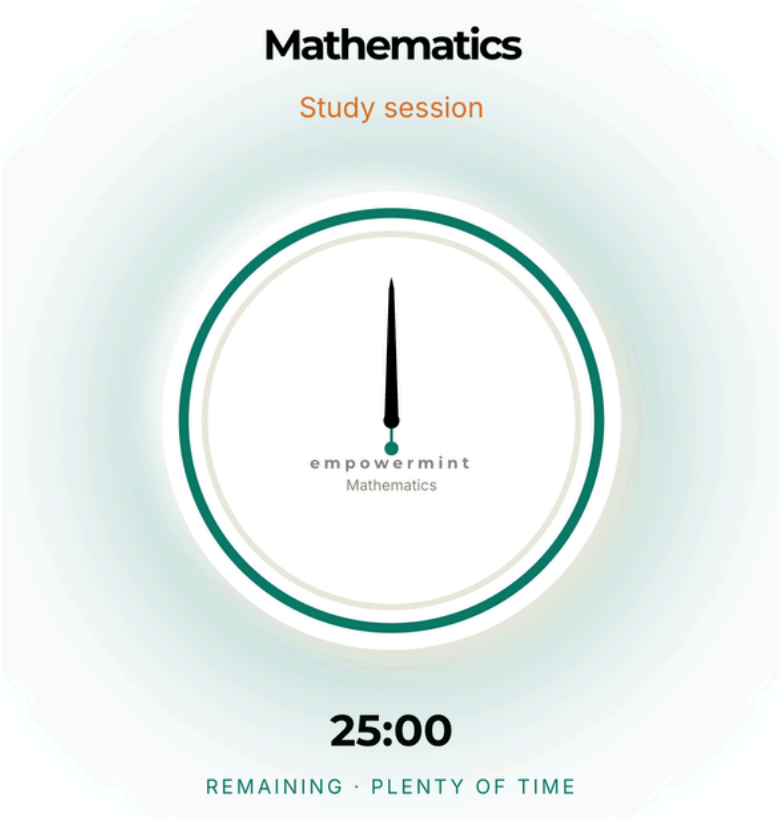
The SSP's Focus Timer is designed to make every 25-minute session as focused and effective as possible. Here's what it does:

It counts down from 25:00 — visible at all times on a premium watch-style dial.

The sweep hand changes colour as the session progresses:

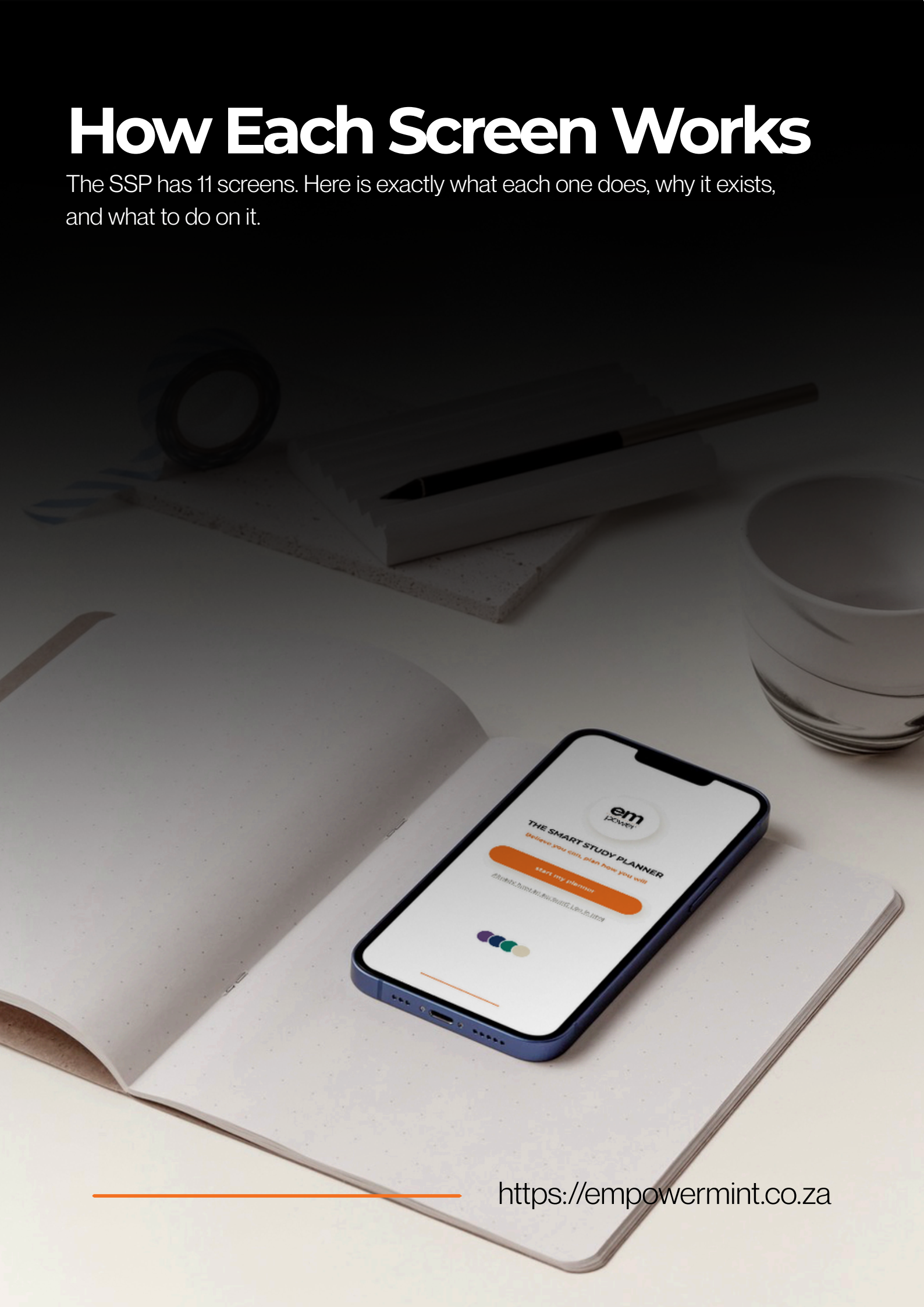
🟢 Green (more than 10 minutes remaining) — calm, plenty of time
🟡 Amber (under 10 minutes) — steady pace, wrap up your thought
🔴 Red (under 2 minutes) — almost there, strong finish

When the session ends, it logs automatically to your daily plan. No manual tracking needed.



How Each Screen Works

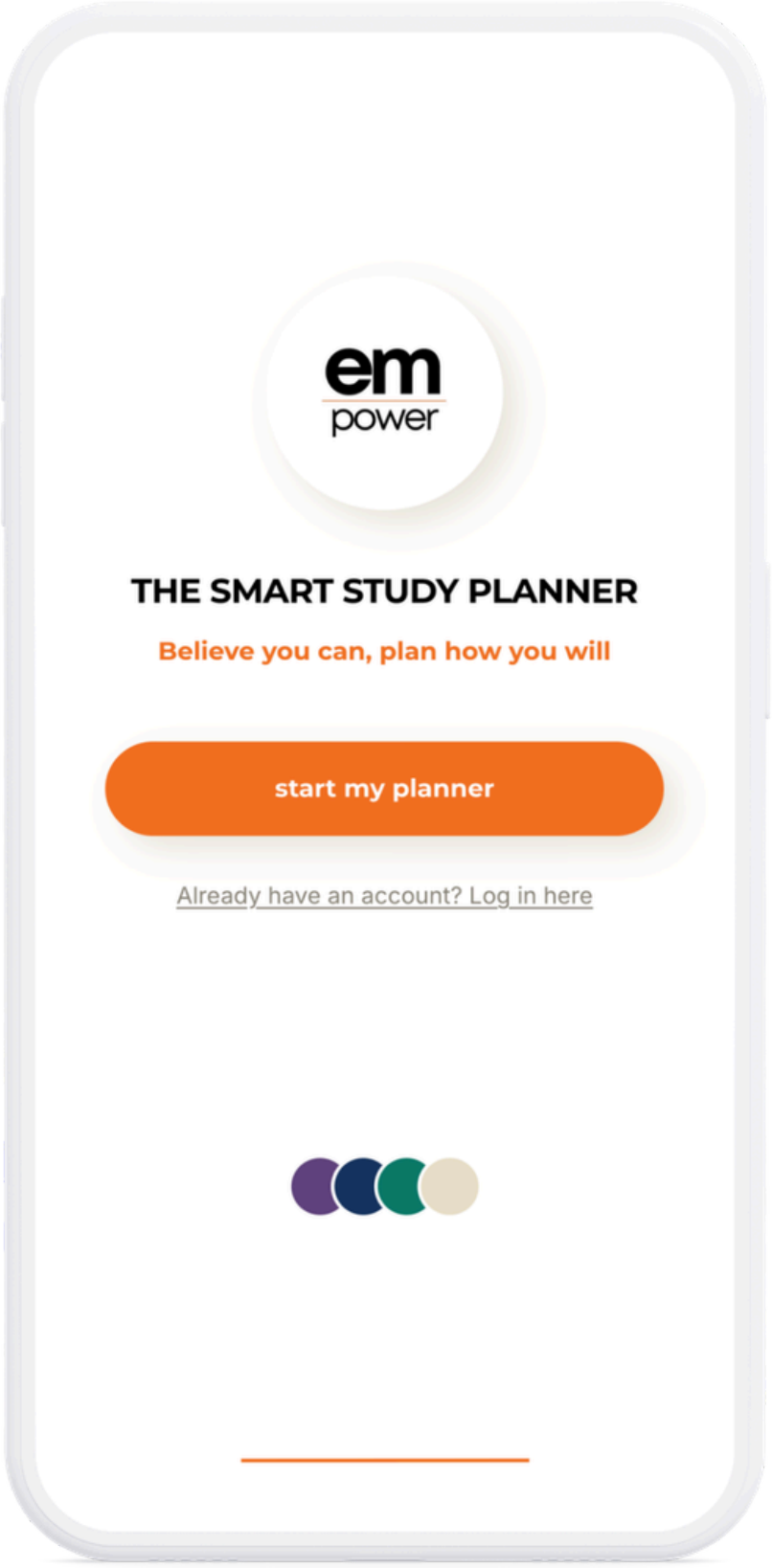
The SSP has 11 screens. Here is exactly what each one does, why it exists, and what to do on it.



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Landing Page

The first screen you see — before you log in or register.



→ This is the entry point for every new learner and every returning learner.

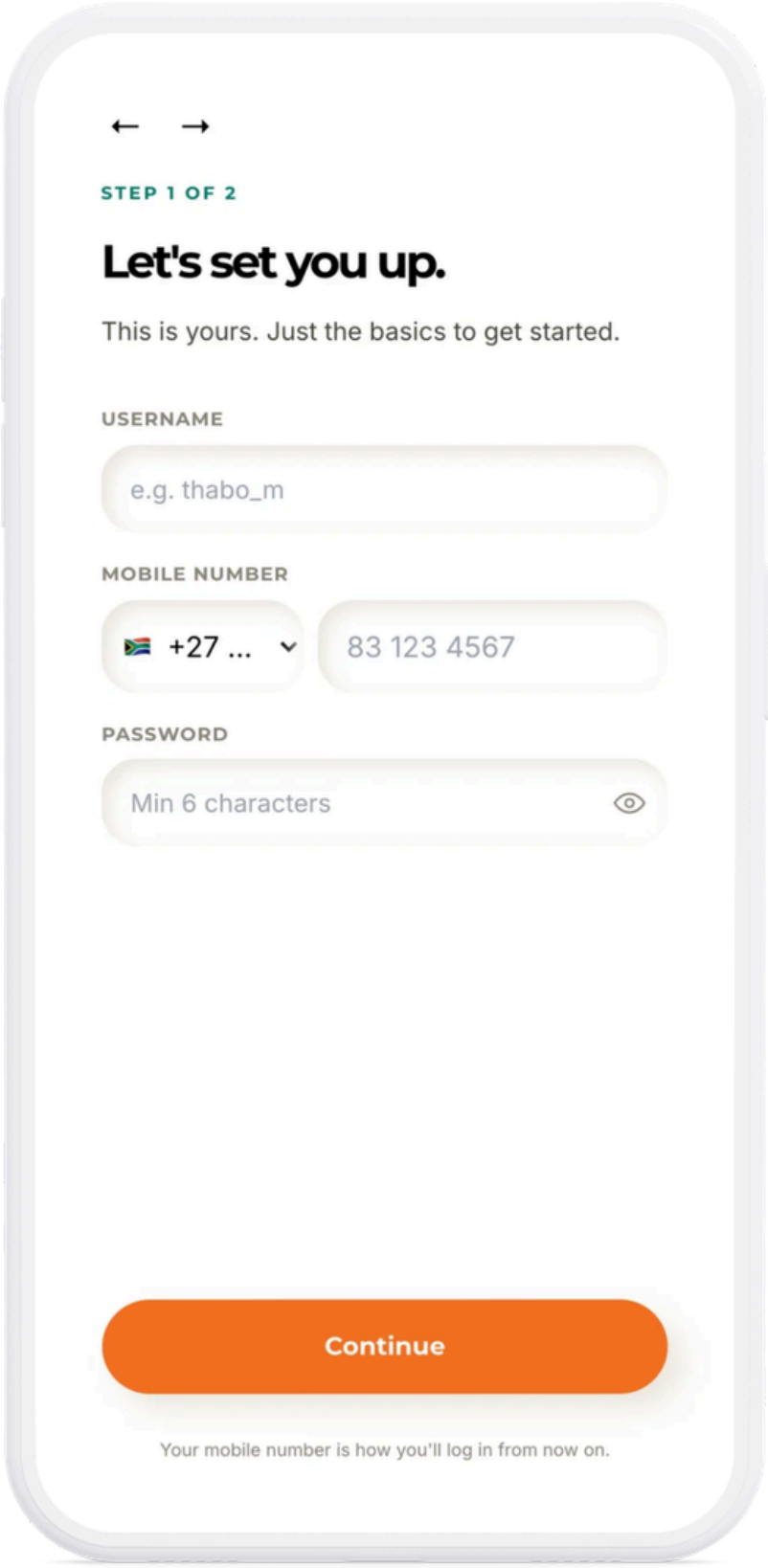
→ '**Start my planner**' takes new users to the registration flow.

→ 'Already have an account? **'Log in'** takes returning learners straight to their plan.

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Registration — Step 1

Once you have clicked on the “ start my planner”, button, you will be taken to this screen, which is for you to register and get your account.



→ **Username**: choose any name you like — this is how the app greets you.

→ **Mobile number**: this is your unique identifier. It replaces an email address.

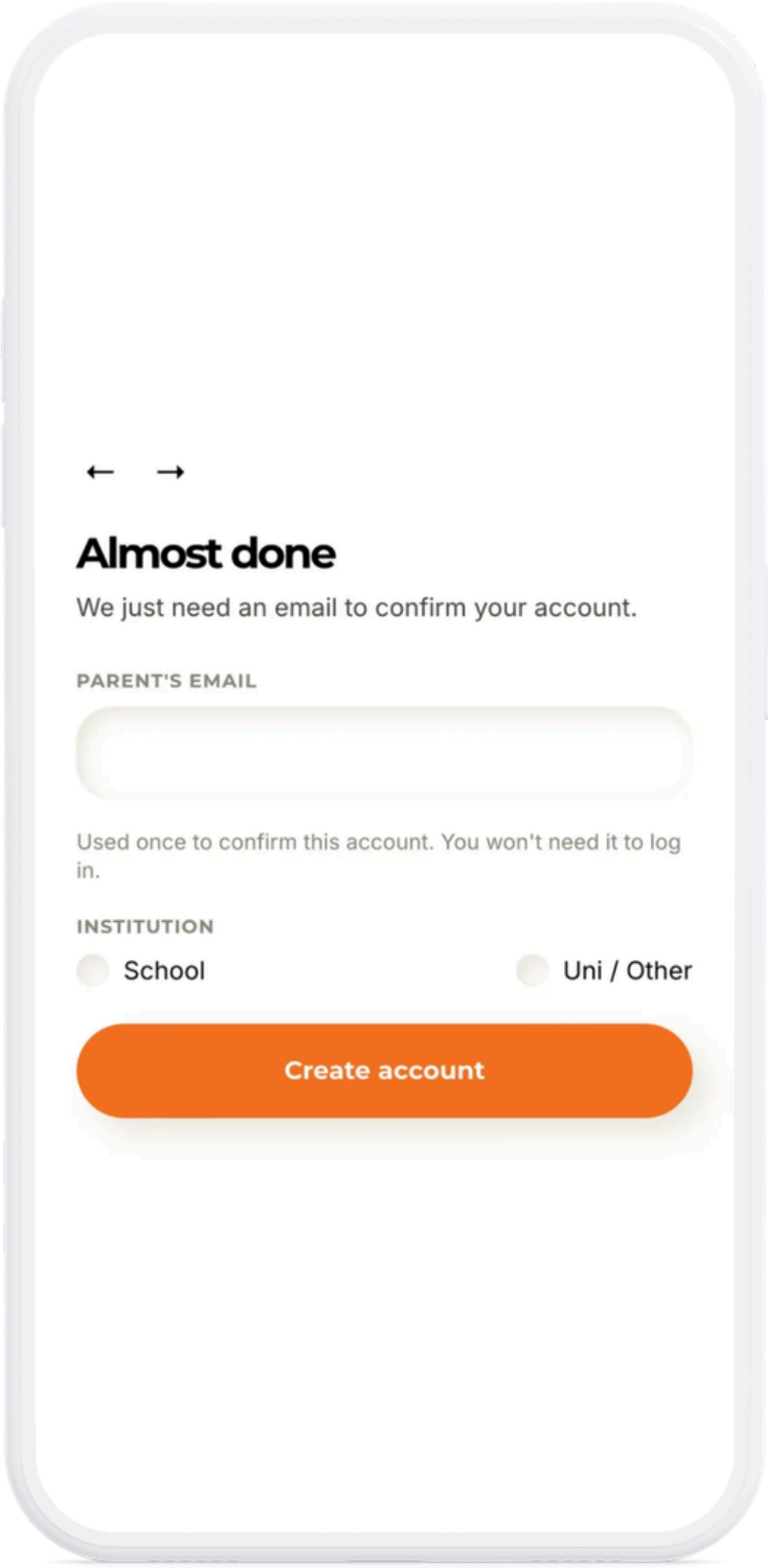
→ **Password**: minimum 6 characters. Choose something you'll remember.

→ Tap '**Continue**' when all three fields are filled. The app validates everything before moving forward.

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Registration — Step 2

Next, we need more information about you.



→ **Parent email** — enter your parent's email here. Need this to confirm your registration.

→ **School** or **University**

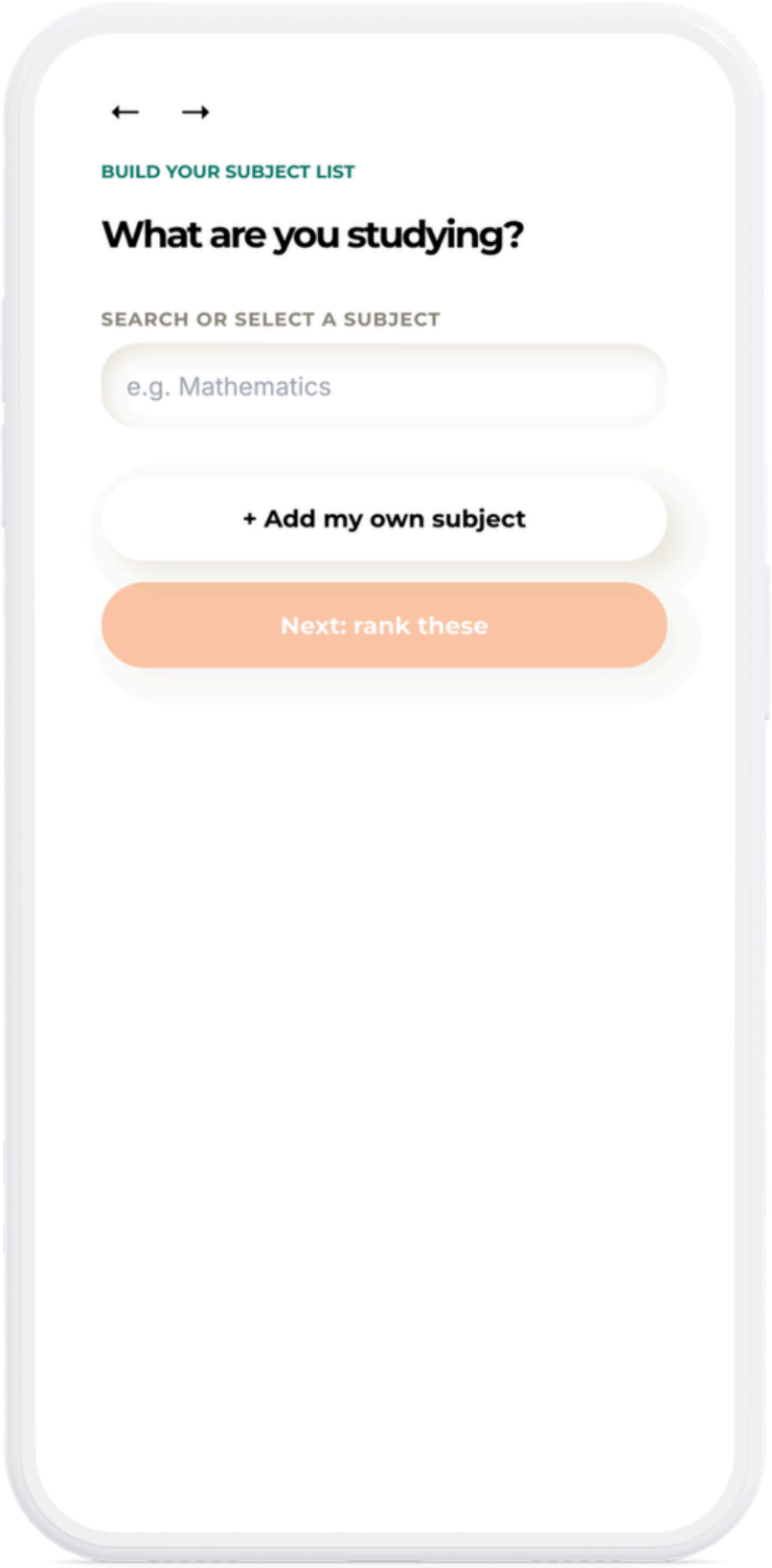
→ **Grade** or **year of study**

→ Then **click on create account**. You will then receive a confirmation email, click it and you are good to go.

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Add Subjects

Once your account is confirmed, we now need to add in the subjects you are studying for.



→ The dropdown contains the full CAPS/IEB subject list for South African school learners.

→ **Select a subject** and it appears as a row in your list. You can remove any subject with the ✕ button.

→ **'+ Add my own subject'** lets you type any subject name — for university modules, professional qualifications, or any subject not on the CAPS list.

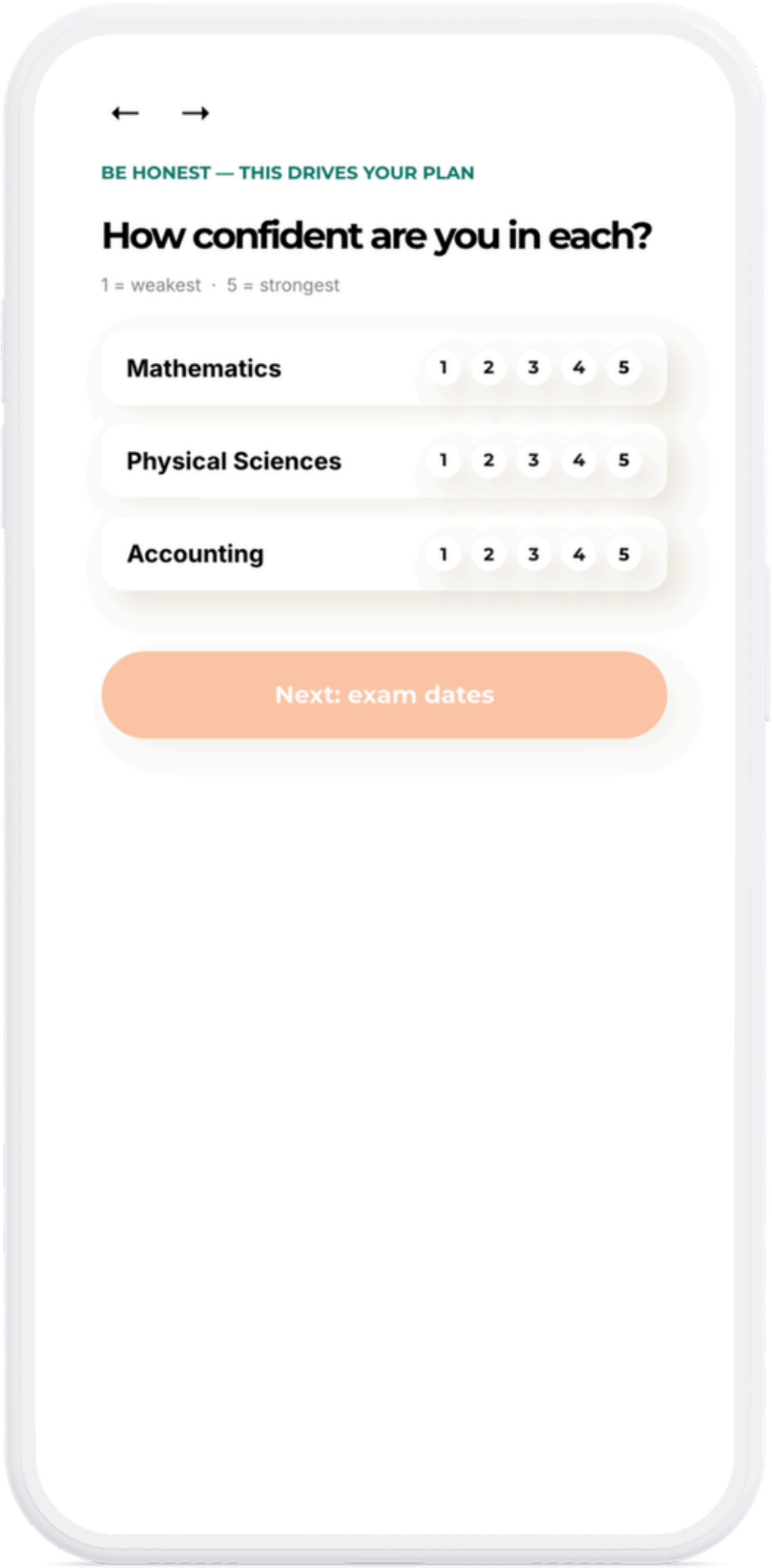
→ No limit on how many subjects you can add.

→ 'Next: rank these' only activates once at least one subject has been added.

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Rank Subjects

The most important step — be completely honest here.



→ 1 = weakest (the subject you struggle with most)
→ 5 = strongest (the subject you feel most confident about)

→ Tap a dot next to each subject to set your confidence score. Only one dot can be selected per subject.

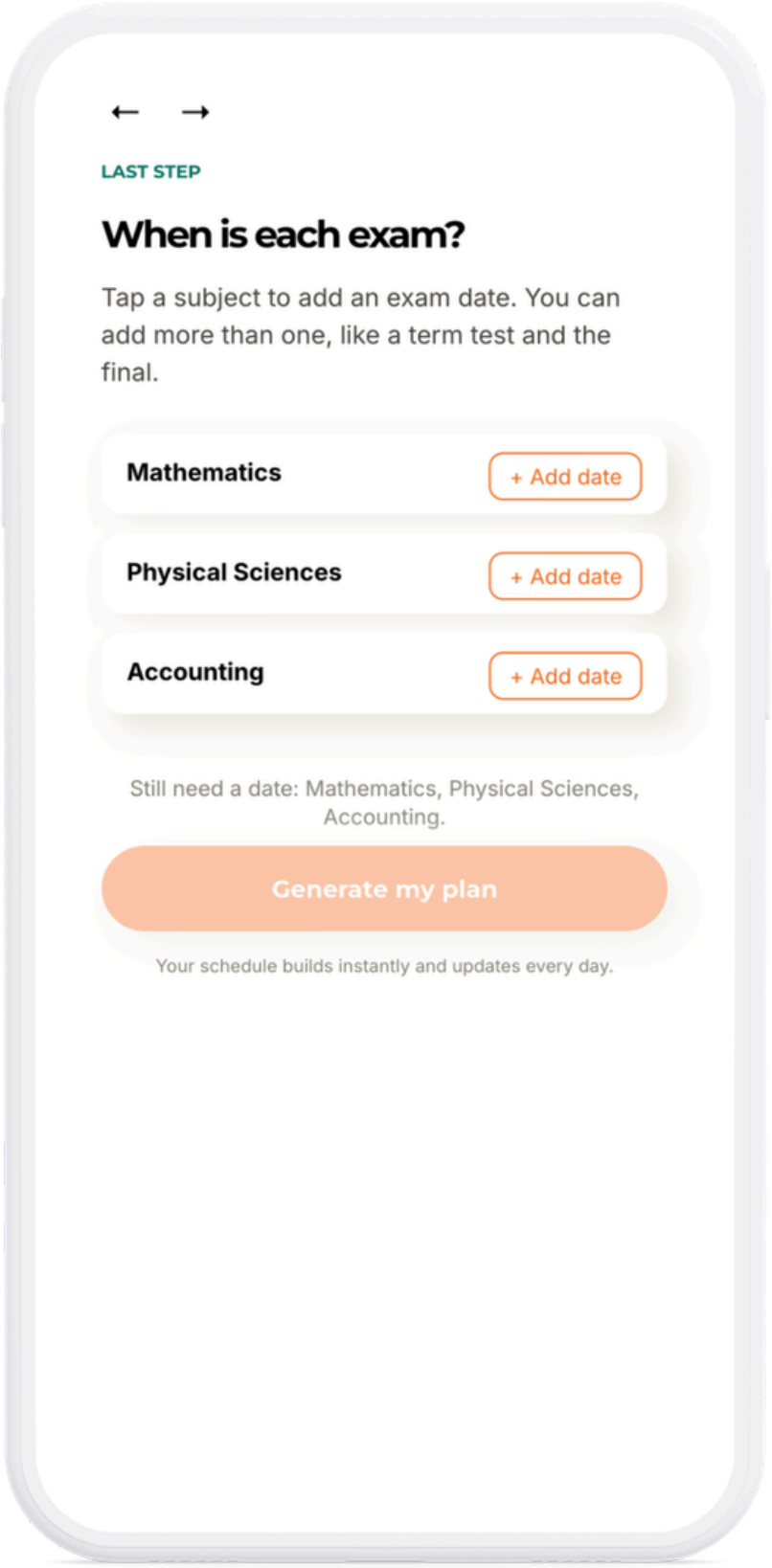
→ All subjects must be ranked before the 'Next: exam dates' button activates.

→ Your confidence score directly drives the Priority Score formula that decides which subject gets studied first each day.

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Exam Dates

The last setup step — takes 30 seconds.



→ Tap any subject row to open your phone's date picker.

→ Select the **exam date** — the chip updates to show the date (e.g. '12 Sep').

→ All subjects need a date before 'Generate my plan' activates.

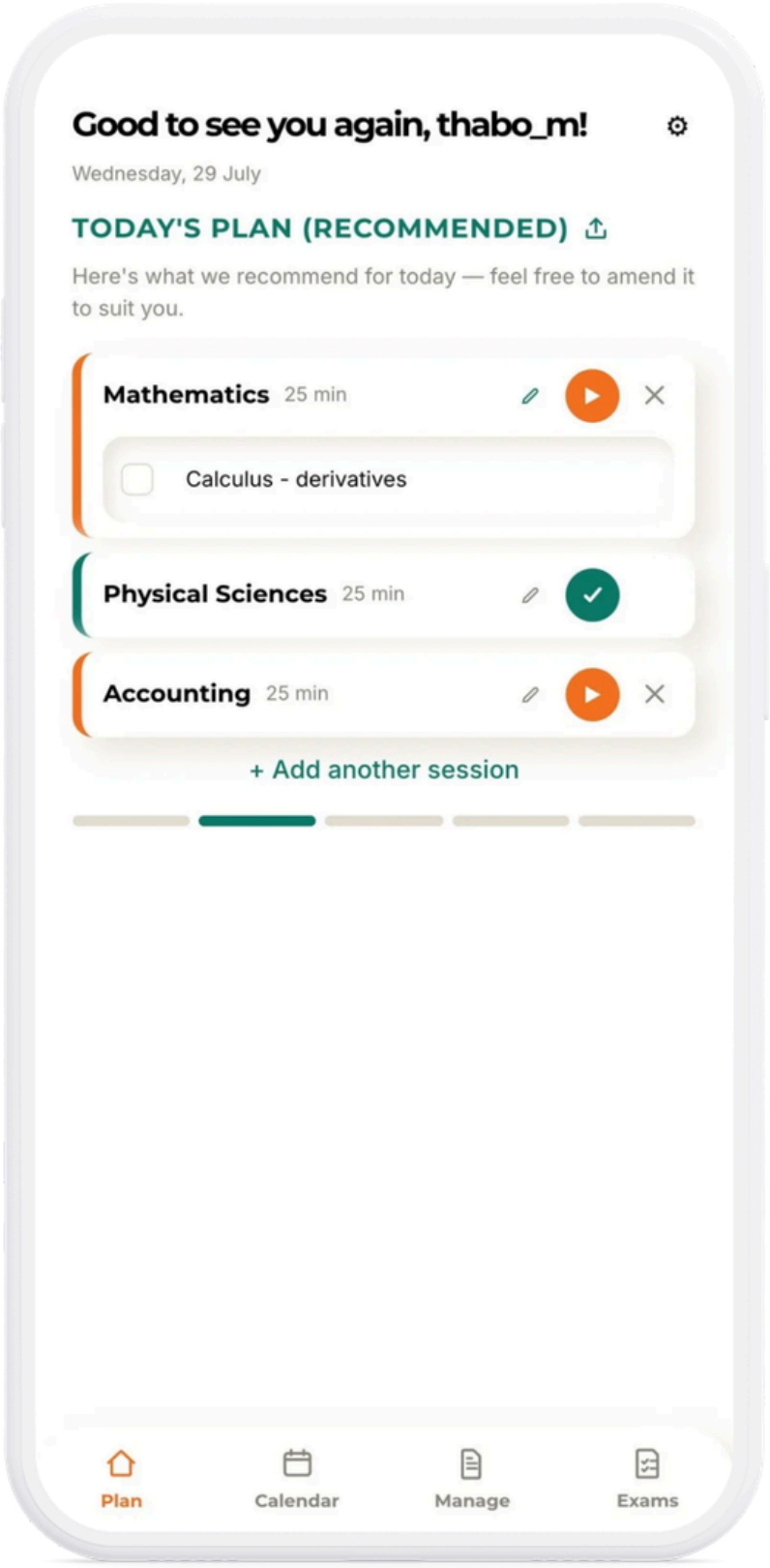
→ Dates must be in the future — today's date or past dates are not accepted.

→ Once all dates are set, tap 'Generate my plan' — your personal daily study plan is created instantly.

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Today's Plan

Your Dashboard - Opens here every time you log in.



→ Shows you your **study plan** for the day. Updates automatically on a daily basis, keeping you in the know.

→ **Session cards:** your study sessions for today, ordered by priority. Orange border = not done. Teal border = session completed. Add in a **topic** per session.

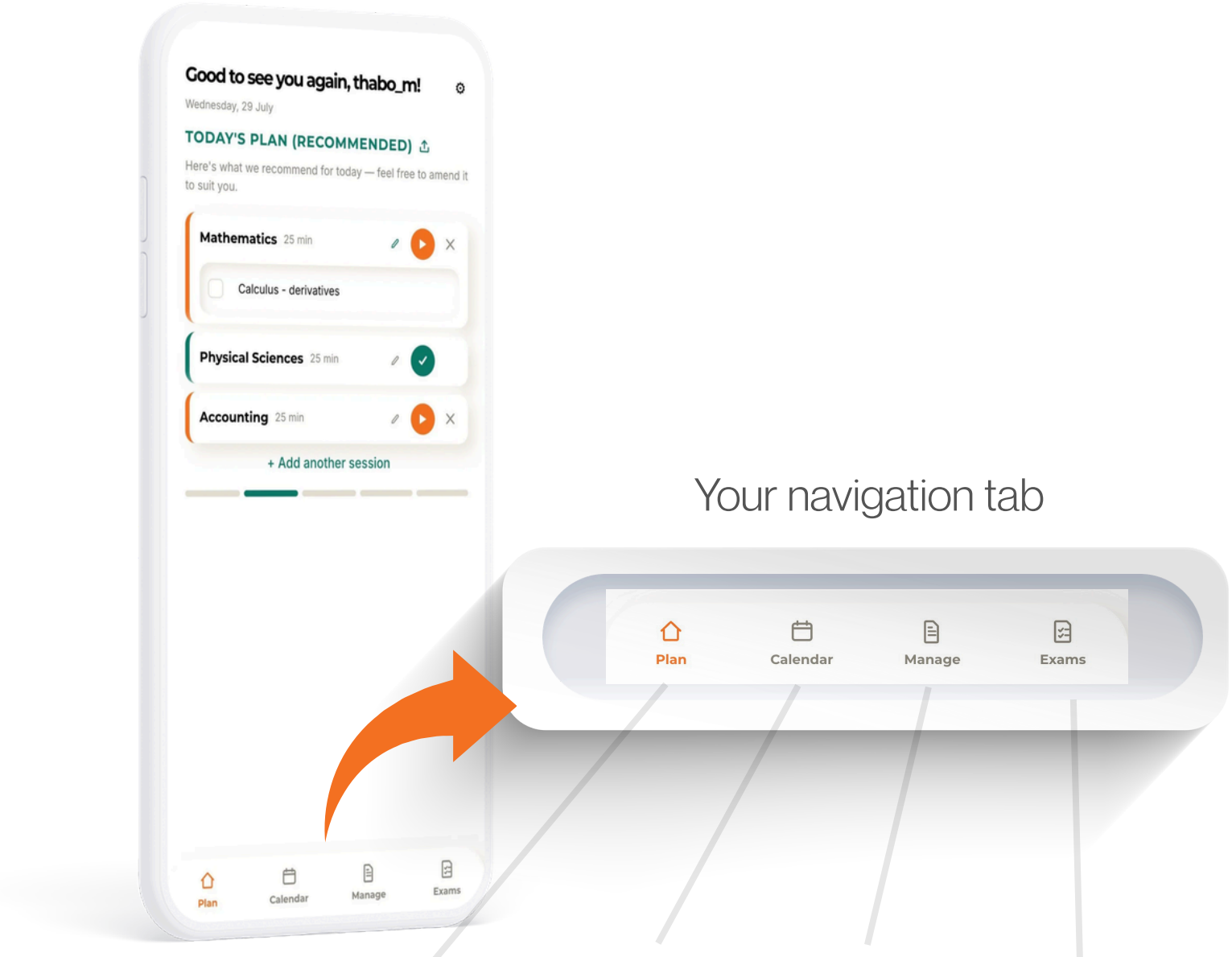
→ Tap any session card to start the **Focus Timer** for that subject.

→ **Progress strip** at the bottom shows sessions completed vs remaining for the day.

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Today's Plan
(Your Dashboard)

The plan regenerates every night at midnight. When you wake up tomorrow, a fresh plan is already waiting — built around where you are today, not where you were yesterday.



Plan
This is your study planner screen.

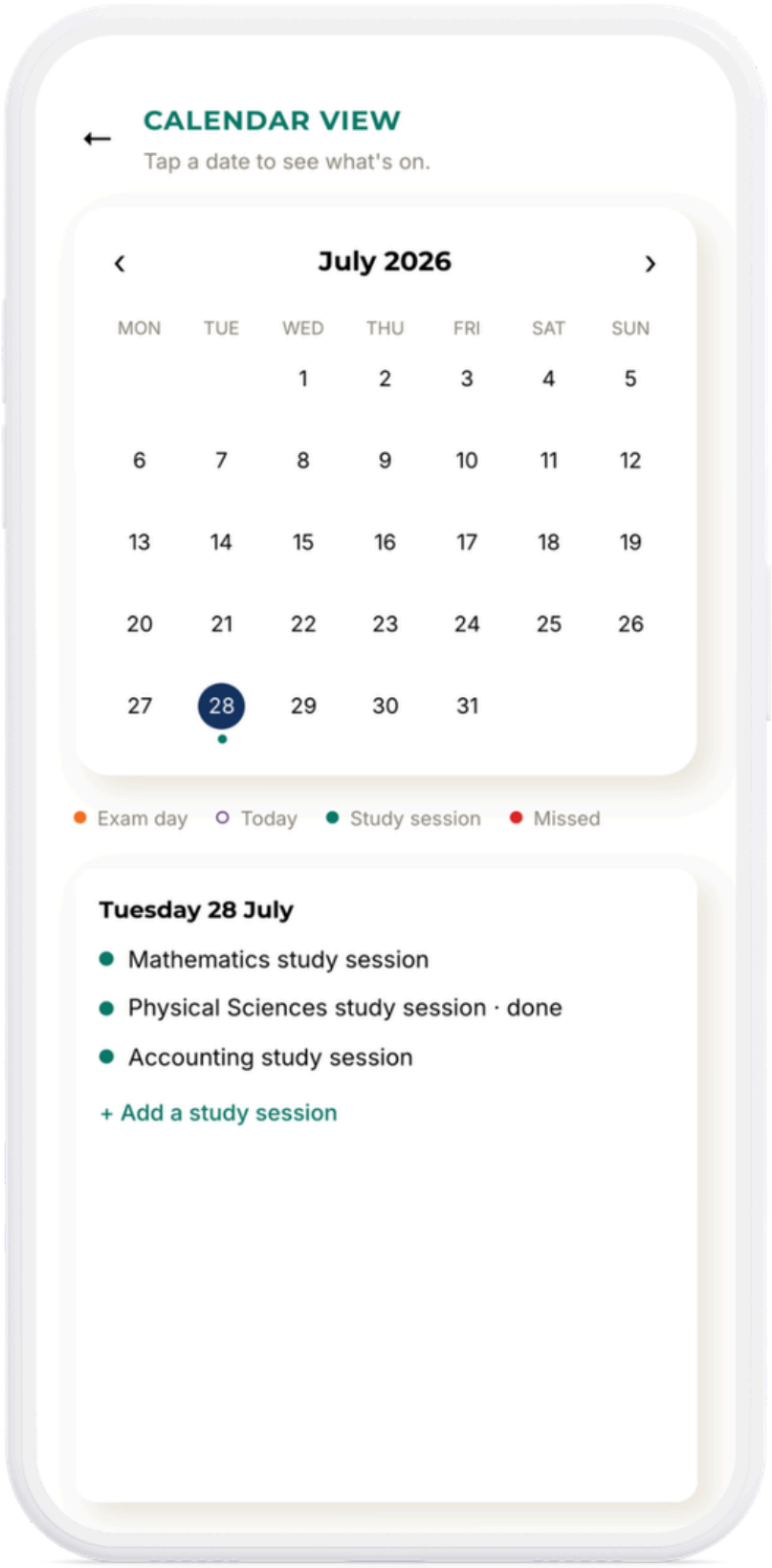
Calendar
This is your calendar view of your plan and exam dates.

Manage
Here you can change your subjects, your rankings and even add exam dates.

Exams
This tab informs you of your upcoming exams.

Calendar

Check your plan for the months ahead



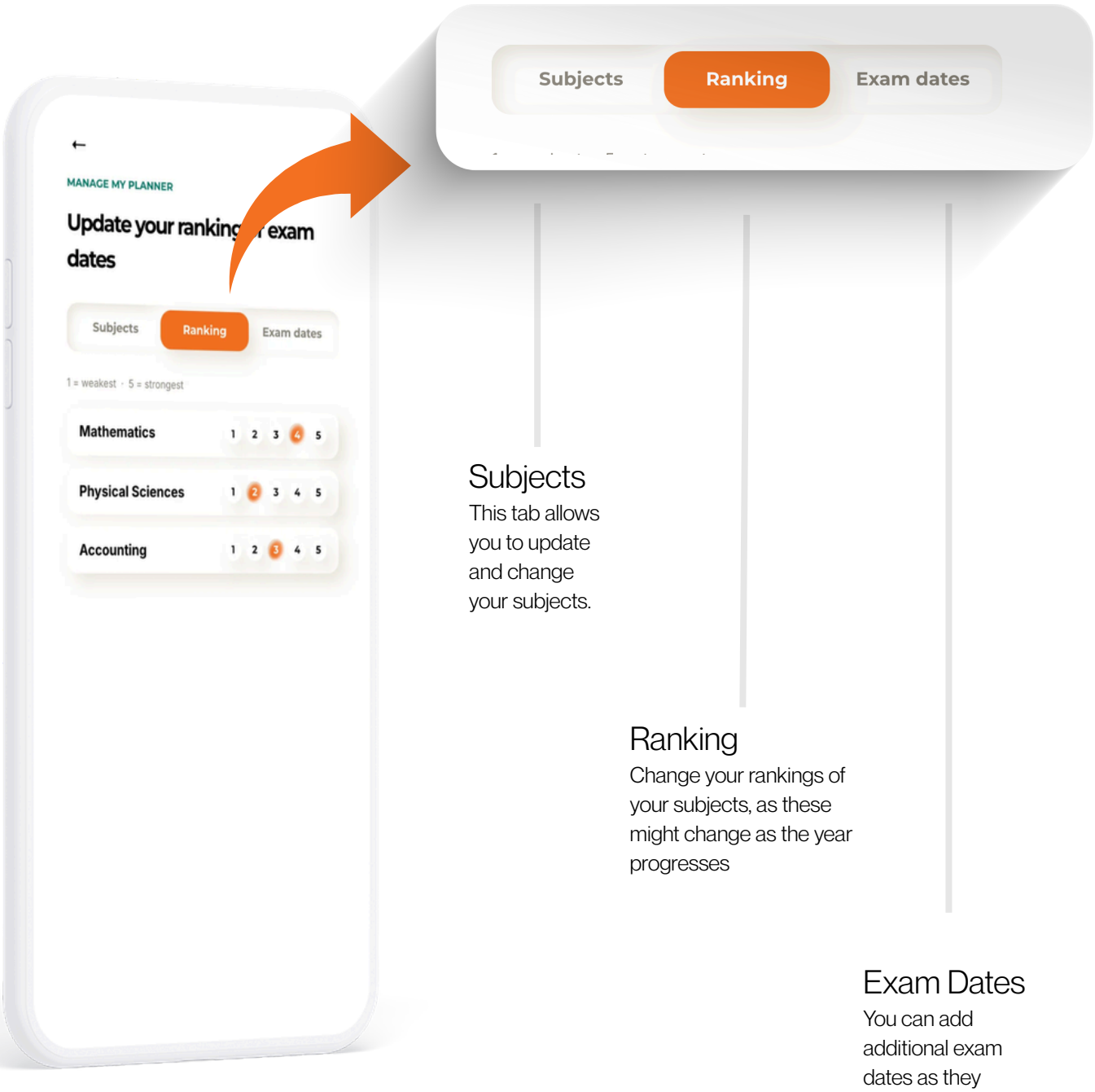
→ Shows you your **study plan** and upcoming exams all in one place.

→ See sessions missed and today's plan.

→You can also add in another study session in this tab.

Manage

Manage your study planner here. From changing your subjects, to updating your rankings, or to add in additional exam dates.



Subjects

This tab allows you to update and change your subjects.

Ranking

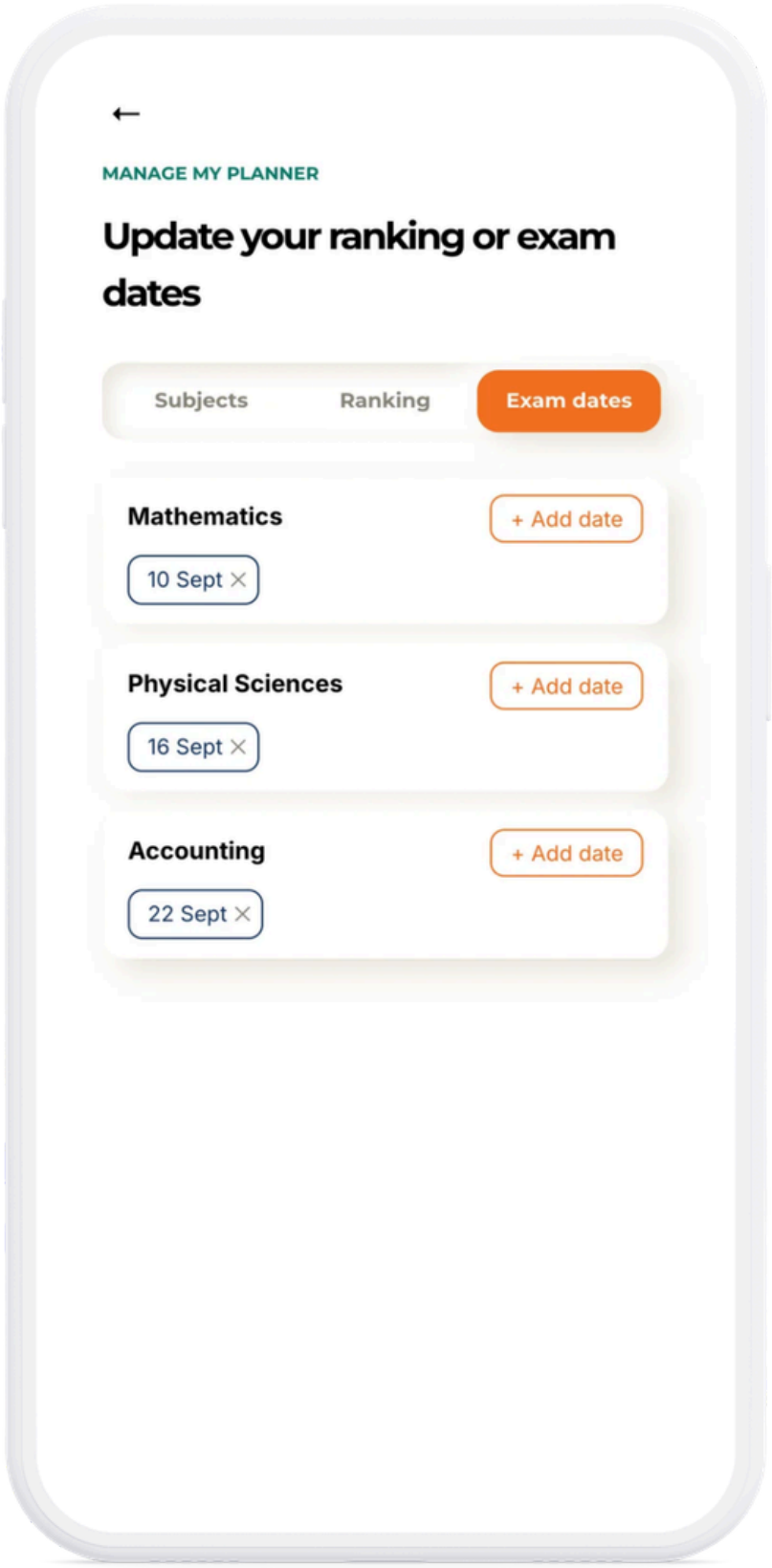
Change your rankings of your subjects, as these might change as the year progresses

Exam Dates

You can add additional exam dates as they become available.

Exam Date

Amend and change your exam dates here



→ You can manage your exam dates here.

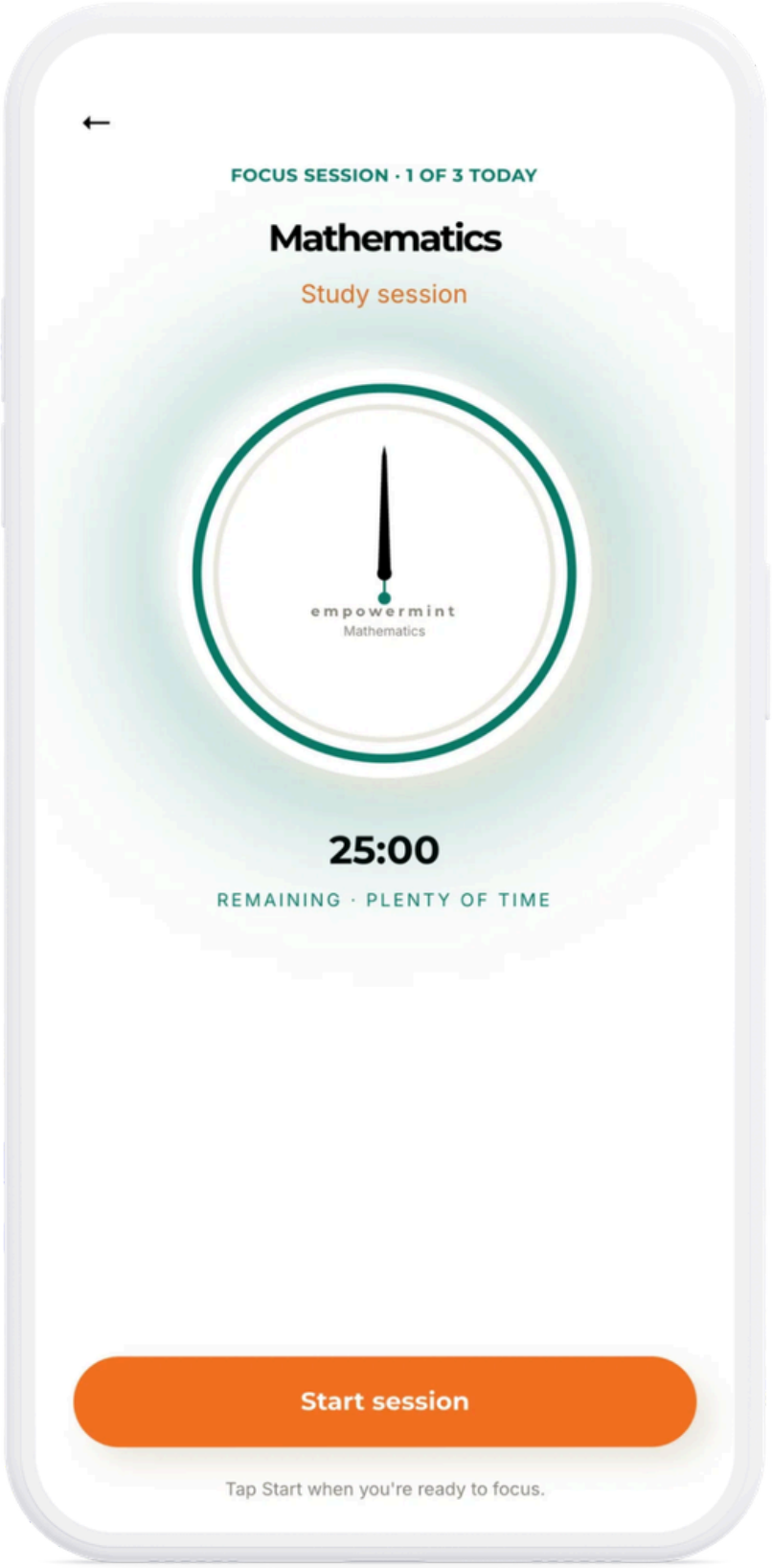
→ Add or remove exam dates as they become available.

→ This allows flexibility and keeps you updated.

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Focus Timer

Use this timer to keep track of your study sessions, fully focused.



→ The watch face shows a 25-minute scale — not the usual 60. Each numeral marks a 5-minute interval.

→ The date window shows the subject being studied (e.g. Mathematics).

→ Digital readout below the watch shows the exact time remaining.

→ 'Pause' / 'End session' — pause if you need a moment, end if you've finished early.

🟢 Green (more than 10 minutes remaining) — calm, plenty of time

🟡 Amber (under 10 minutes) — steady pace, wrap up your thought

🔴 Red (under 2 minutes) — almost there, strong finish

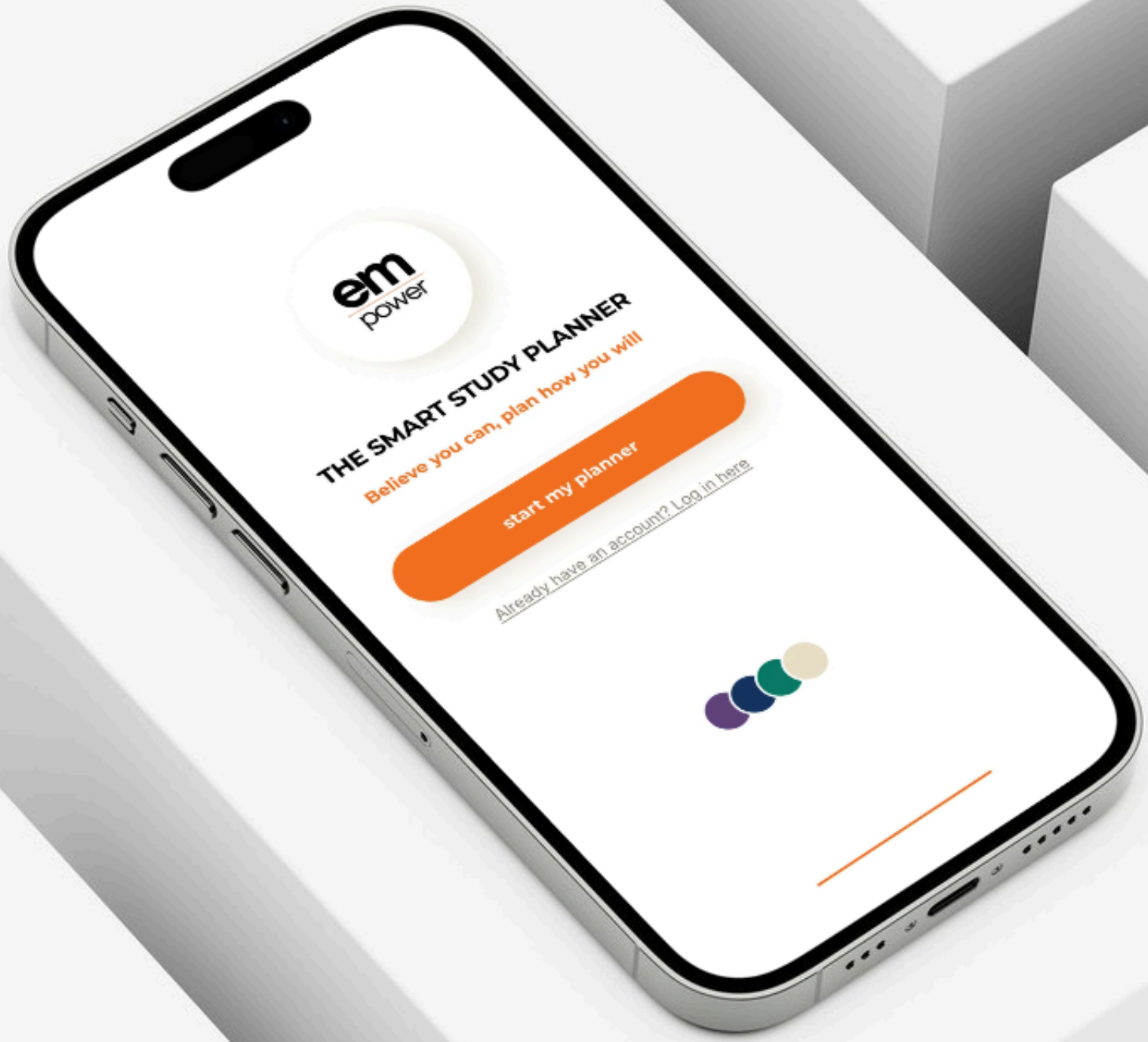
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