

Tips & Strategies for Online Learning



Be Organized

- Experiment with different locations to set up a dedicated learning environment for studying. Knowing exactly where important dates, files, forms, syllabi, books, and assignments live will help keep you on track towards hitting your goals.



Have a stable internet connection



Have the required books, materials, and software for the course



Have headphones for listening to lectures or discussions (especially important in shared spaces)

Eliminate Distractions



You will be faced with many distractions that can easily derail your studies. The best students know how to lessen these distractions and set aside time to focus.



Exactly how much of a challenge these distractions will prove to be will depend on your own unique personality and situation. Ultimately, you will need to find a strategy that works best for you.



Regardless of where you choose to work, consider turning your cell phone off to avoid losing focus every time a text message or notification pops up.

Avoid Multitasking

Many people think they can do multiple things at once. However, research shows us that only about 2% of the population can multitask.

Downsides of Multitasking

Assignments take longer.

Distractions and switching between tasks fatigue the brain.

When your brain is divided, you're less able to commit learning to long-term memory.

Focus on one thing at a time.

Take breaks between tasks.

Consider the "Pomodoro timer method" to help you focus and provide a strategy for staying on task.

What to Do Instead

Keep on Track



Stick to your instructor's schedule as much as you can. Staying on a schedule will help you have a feeling of normalcy and prevent you from falling way behind.



Find out how to ask questions. Is there a discussion forum? Email your professor.



Close distracting apps. Humans are not as good at multitasking as they think!



Continue to take notes during lectures as you would if you were there in person.

Set a Schedule

- Setting a schedule for yourself can help provide structure and keep you motivated. If you don't already keep a weekly or daily calendar, try something like the example below to organize your time.

DAILY SCHEDULE			
Day:		March 7	
	Scheduled activity	Course tasks	Personal / Self-care
8:00 AM			
8:30 AM			
9:00 AM			
9:30 AM			
10:00 AM			
10:30 AM			
11:00 AM			

Feel free to make a copy of this document for your own personal use! Select File > Make a Copy.

Actively Participate

- Many classes utilize discussion forums to help you better understand course materials and engage with fellow classmates. Discussions might include:
 - Responding to specific questions
 - Leading the discussion about a specific topic or reading
 - Commenting on a classmate's paper
 - Posting a question about a project you're working on
- Read what other students and your instructor are saying, and if you have a question, ask for clarification.
- Set a goal to check in on the class discussion threads each day.
- If you do feel yourself falling behind, speak up. Don't wait until an assignment is almost due to ask questions or report issues. Email your instructor and be proactive in asking for help.

Leverage Your Network

- Staying in touch with instructors and classmates is essential for continued success.



Attend virtual office hours or study groups so that you can stay up on your coursework.



Build relationships with other students by engaging in online discussion boards and asking for help.



Create a virtual study group.

Figure Out How You Learn Best

- Once you've established where you'll learn, think about when and how you accomplish your best work.
 - If you're a morning person, make time to study first thing.
 - If you're more of a night owl, set aside time after dinner.
- Not everyone learns the same way, so think about what types of information might help you best grasp new concepts and employ relevant study strategies

Hold Yourself Accountable



Set goals at the beginning of the semester and check in with yourself weekly. It's up to you to make sure you've allotted enough time to complete the work so you're not starting an assignment the day before it's due.



If you're having trouble holding yourself responsible, pair up with a classmate or enlist the help of someone from the cadre, a parent, or friend to check in as an accountability partner.



By being organized, proactive, and self-aware, you can help yourself to be successful online even if life outside of campus becomes chaotic.