

Strategies for Remote Learning Success

In the midst of so many unprecedented changes in our academic and personal lives, please pay generous attention to taking care of yourself. During the second half of the Spring 2020 semester, we will all be learning in new ways, and it will challenge all of us. What we ask from you is the same thing we're asking from the faculty – "do your best." This guide offers some suggestions for how to make a plan and take care of yourself under these new circumstances, including suggestions for how to: **stay organized, avoid multitasking, make the most of online lectures, build new learning habits, work with a team, and remain socially connected and healthy.**

1 stay organized

Your professors have been working hard to reorganize and reimagine your courses to work online. A lot may have changed, so carefully read the new versions of your syllabi and make sure you can answer these questions:

Make a schedule

Include meals, school, exercise, self-care, breaks, and remote contact with coaches, advisors, and/or counselors.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:00		Breakfast		Breakfast	Yoga class on YouTube
9:00	Breakfast	HIS 240 Zoom		HIS 240 Zoom	Breakfast
10:00		Call coach	Breakfast		
11:00	BIO 110 worksheet			Discussion forum posts	Record SPA 121 conversation
12:00		Long run	Watch BIO 110 lecture		
1:00				Lunch	
...					

- ✓ **Identify how class activities will occur:**
 - Are there live Zoom classes, lecture videos posted on Moodle, discussion forums on Google Hangouts, etc?
 - Will they be synchronous (live at a specific time) or asynchronous (watch/do anytime)?

- ✓ **Check if assignments have changed:**
 - Are there new due dates?
 - How/where will you submit assignments?
 - What format will exams use?

- ✓ **Learn how to get help:**
 - Is your professor offering virtual office hours?
 - Is there a forum or other place to ask questions?
 - Can you connect with classmates using Slack, group chat, text, hangouts, Whatsapp, etc?

If you're doing more work on your own and your time is less structured, you might be tempted to multitask. Many people think they can do multiple things at once, but research shows that only about 2% can. What you are really doing is switching between tasks very quickly (some call this "micro-tasking").

2 avoid "micro-tasking"

Downsides of micro-tasking



- **Assignments take longer:** Each time you come back to an assignment (from Instagram for example), you have to get familiar with it, find your spot, and remember what you were going to do next.
- **You're more likely to make mistakes:** Distractions and switching between tasks tires out the brain.
- **You'll remember less:** When your brain is divided, you're less able to commit what you're learning to long-term memory (because it doesn't get encoded properly into your brain).

When you need to study something important: • Focus on one thing at a time. • Take breaks between tasks. • Consider the "pomodoro method" to help you focus for 25- or 50-minute periods and then reward yourself with 5- or 10-minute breaks



3 make the most of online classes

-  **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.*
-  **Establish a workspace (or several).** *Find a comfortable area where you can minimize distractions for Zoom sessions and think about the kinds of spaces you need for your various class activities.*
-  **Find out how to ask questions.** *Ask your professor how to engage with classes. Chat? Discussion forums? etc.*
-  **Close distracting tabs and apps.** *Humans are not as good at multitasking as they think! (See #2 above.)*
-  **Continue to take notes as you would if you were there in person.**
-  **Watch recordings at normal speed.** *Research shows that playback speed of 1.5x can lower your retention and can result in lower scores on assessments. Faster playback speeds are worse for complex, multi-step material.*

4 build new learning habits

You may need to adapt the habits you've already established on campus. For example:
If you usually study in the library: think about what works for you there (the quiet? the large table? the comfortable chair?) and try to recreate it.
If you like to study with a group: use Zoom or chat to recreate the accountability and companionship of group learning, but try to avoid distractions.
If you procrastinate: remember that you won't have the structure of regular class meetings, practices, etc. Set goals, stick to a schedule, and give yourself time.
If you never check email on campus: remember that email is more essential than ever; check it 2x a day at least.

Collaborating remotely with a group looks different, but can be done. Consider the following strategies:

5 work with a team



Create a timeline

With less face-to-face contact, the project may seem "out of sight, out of mind" so make a schedule and stick to it



Meet regularly

Use Zoom, group chat, Facetime, etc. to check in regularly and communicate about important tasks



Focus collaboration

Set an agenda for your meetings, take notes in a shared document, and avoid multitasking during meetings



Check in with others

If you sense a team member is disconnected, reach out to them or your professor



Communication is so important when learning remotely! Take advantage of opportunities to check in with your professors and classmates, maintain contact, and ask questions. If you need help with technology, internet, library resources, or course material, please ask.



6 remain socially connected and healthy

As we limit how much face-to-face time we spend with others on campus, connecting with family and friends and taking care of our own emotional, mental, and physical health is more important than ever. Here are some ideas, tips, and resources:

Connect

Schedule video calls, host Netflix parties, continue to engage remotely with clubs, Greek life, teams, and other social groups. Take this chance to spend unexpected time with family and pets.

Care

Establish a healthy daily schedule that includes sleep, school work, exercise, fresh air, nourishing food, social interaction, and fun. Remember to occasionally disconnect from social media and the news cycle.

Breathe

This is temporary. It's ok to grieve canceled travel, lost research projects, a disrupted senior year. You'll find your way and get back on track. Everyone at Centre cares about you and misses you and you will be ok.

Resources:

