

TIPS FOR SUCCESS IN REMOTE LEARNING:

So all of a sudden all of the classes you were taking on campus with your friends are online for the rest of the semester. And you're back home with everyone else trying to do the same thing. So what can you do?

GET ORGANIZED

Find a space

Try to find a space to study that has good internet access, is as free from distractions as possible and is comfortable (you'll be working in one place for longer periods than perhaps you are used to). As more people adopt good social distancing and working and studying from home, this may be a challenge. Ask others in your home to avoid interrupting you when you are in your study area to allow you to concentrate on your classes. Experiment with a variety of places to find a space that works best for you and establish a routine of using that space. Set up your study space in a way that will help to keep you organized and focused.

Set a schedule

One of the biggest challenges many students face in an online environment is the less rigid structure for the coursework. Treat an online course as you would an on-campus course, setting aside a regular time to engage with material online, work on assignments, and engage with your classmates. It may be helpful to keep to your on-campus schedule – if you have a class at 9:00 on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, keep in the habit of being “in class,” even if it isn't meeting.

Know what to expect

Suddenly having most of your time unstructured can be exciting, until it's not. Create a routine and stick to it to help make your transition to online learning smoother. Setting aside time during the day for your courses and keeping to your schedule will help you stay on track of assignments and material and keep you motivated. As a note: Expect your online courses to take as much time, and possibly more, as your in-person courses did. Reflect on the amount of time you have been accustomed to spending on your academic work – class time, review, library research, homework, extra time for major assignments – and use this to create a schedule that has daily and weekly goals. Remember to schedule some cushion in your schedule – getting answers to questions in a class that meets remotely takes time.

TIP:

Change out of your pajamas!

Make goals and keep track

Make a plan for what you will need to accomplish during the remainder of the semester—keeping in mind that some of your assignments may change now. Keep track of changes in your course syllabi, your to-do lists, upcoming due dates and your schedule in your preferred planning tool. Also, keep track of your progress – make a plan. Know what is due, when, and HOW it is to be submitted. This last part is an important one for those not used to operating in the LMS.

Be sure to not let deadlines sneak up on you! Set yourself reminders to make sure that important dates are visible to you. You might want to use an online calendar, a paper planner, or a mobile app – it doesn't matter so long as it is something that you will actually use and see every day. In fact, go ahead and set it up now. I'll wait...

Done? Great. Let's continue.

Don't Multitask

Another challenge students face in online settings is an abundance of distractions, both physical and digital. Setting up your study space and communicating with those around you can help minimize the first. Being disciplined about not multitasking can help with the second.

TIP:

Turn off distractions when you are studying.

Often, people think they are being more efficient when they multitask, accomplishing two or more things at the same time. The truth is, shifting concentration from one task to another tires the brain out and makes learning, and other tasks, harder.

To make focusing on the task at hand easier, make sure you give yourself time for breaks, getting up and stretching, shifting to a physical task (that laundry isn't going to wash itself), and checking on friends. When you're working on your studies, ignore the texts, don't check email, turn off the TV (or Netflix) and allow yourself to focus on your work.

GET READY

Test out your computer and internet connection to make sure everything is up to date and ready to go. Check for any pre-tests, assessments, or other check-points that may be required before officially beginning coursework, such as an orientation to online learning offered by your institution. Even if it isn't required, if available, taking one is a great way to make sure you're ready to go.

Explore the learning space and become familiar with the tools in the Learning Management System. If you don't have a computer, will be sharing one with others in your home who will also be studying or working from home, have limited internet access or a slow connection, or some other factor that may make it harder for you to engage in online learning, reach out to your faculty to let them know. Your institution for specific guidance on how to accommodate and adapt for low bandwidth settings.

There is still help

Most institutions will continue to provide support to students (remotely) on technology, tutoring, and other academic areas as classes shift online. Check to see what services are available and make use of them (they'll be lonely otherwise). Check on how you can connect with your advisors, faculty, and other staff who can help you. Remember, even from your home, you still have virtual access to your library, GALILEO, and a host of other tools to help!

GET BUSY

Check in early and often

Check your institutional email regularly for notifications and updates. This is the official channel for institutional communications, and you'll get course and other updates through that email. Engage with your faculty and classmates by email or text (consider setting up a group text with your classmates). Or just use your phone as a phone and call. Stick to your schedule or make adjustments as needed.

Depending on your instructor, you may have online classes

TIP:

Check in with your friends and peers regularly via text, video or phone.

that meet virtually, recorded lectures, notes and discussions, activities and assignments or a combination of these and more. Take notes on lectures just as if it were an in-person course.

Actively engage with the course as much as possible. If there are discussions for students in the course, make the most of them, asking your

questions and supporting your fellow students with your input. Doing so can help you, and the rest of the class, feel connected and succeed online.

Check on office hours and support availability and use them – you won't be bothering your instructors; they want to hear from you. Email your instructors and keep in touch, even if only to say hello. Reach out to students in your classes to find someone to study with virtually and help you keep on track and connected to your school and your peers.

Ask questions; make comments.

Faculty depend on non-verbal cues during in-person classes to gauge interest, understanding, confusion, and comprehension. In an online setting, you will need to ask for clarification, indicate understanding, and ask for more detail.

BE FLEXIBLE

This is a new situation for everyone. Finding new routines and strategies and figuring out what works and doesn't work for you will take time. Be patient with yourself and those around you as this unfolds, and share your victories and challenges with your family, friends, faculty, and peers.

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

Shifting to fully online may be stressful, so be sure to take time to get outside (but keep your distance!), pet the cat, eat healthy, and generally take care of yourself.

Check in on each other

Moving online can be difficult in many ways. Social distancing should not mean social isolation. Stay in touch virtually with the people you encounter in class and on campus. Set up video calls, group texts or phone calls to check in with people from your classes, your residence hall or apartment, or who you spend time with socially. Be kind to each other and be there for one another.

TIP:

If you can, get outside (but keep your distance)!

THIS IS NOT PERMANENT

It is important to remember that things will get back to normal; until then, the entire faculty, staff and administration of the USG will work tirelessly to ensure the success of all our students. In the meantime, stay well, get some rest, and wash your hands.

Some additional resources:

6 Time Management Tips for Online Students (Northwestern University)

The Pomodoro Technique: Study More Efficiently, Take More Breaks (University of British Columbia)

Thanks to the Learning Strategies Center at Cornell University and the Total Advising Center at the University of Virginia for some of these tips.