



ADJUSTING YOUR STUDY HABITS

FOR A REMOTE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

RINELLA LEARNING CENTER

1. PLAN AHEAD

We recognize that you may be managing a lot of different responsibilities right now - traveling home, making arrangements with loved ones, etc. Planning ahead will allow you to ensure all your academic responsibilities are met, and will help you feel a greater sense of control during an uncertain time.

ASSIGNMENTS

Are tests still carrying on as usual within your classes? Do you still need to work on major projects due at the end of the semester? Thoroughly review the syllabus and Canvas site for each of your courses to get a good sense of what your workload for each class will be.

TRANSITIONS

How does your professor expect you to stay engaged via the remote format? Getting a sense of how each class will operate remotely will allow you to plan more efficiently. For example, if your professor expects attendance at video lectures, you must plan to be available during those times, just as you would during a face-to-face meeting.

HELP RESOURCES

Learn your professor's preferred modes of contact during this period of remote learning - this will help when it comes to asking questions and keeping in touch. Look into additional resources offered by the university. The university is committed to supporting you academically, and many services are available remotely.

2. GET ORGANIZED

Just as with face-to-face coursework, learning remotely requires you to stay organized and keep up-to-date on recent developments within your courses. There are many tools you can rely upon to help you become more organized during this transition.

TRACK.

Tracking changes, assignments, due dates, and all other important data related to your classes is essential to feeling organized. Why not create a table that collects all this information in one location? The template here might be useful as you try to organize your remote coursework.

	Assignment Due Dates	Meetings/Time Commitments	Changes/Transitions
Course Name			
Course Name			
Course Name			

PRIORITIZE.

Determine what's most important to get done right away, vs. what's less urgent but still significant to be done over a longer period of time. Many folks find the following table helpful for determining what's URGENT (what needs to be done right away) vs. what's IMPORTANT (a significant presence within your course).

Both URGENT and IMPORTANT <i>Do this right away!</i>	URGENT but NOT IMPORTANT <i>Do this soon, but reconsider how much time/energy you spend on it!</i>
IMPORTANT but NOT URGENT <i>Make time to work on this a little bit each day.</i>	Neither IMPORTANT nor URGENT <i>Do this last, after everything else is complete.</i>

FIND A RHYTHM.

When will you do your work? Where will you do it, and what amount of time/space do you need to complete it efficiently? Try to identify a strong routine you can follow that will allow you to complete homework and course responsibilities with regularity: creating a strong routine will help make everything feel habitual. Consider following this template for blocking off your schedule.

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
8:00 AM							
9:00 AM							
10:00 AM							
11:00 AM							
Noon							
1:00 PM		WebEx Class	Office Hours	WebEx Class	Office Hours	WebEx Class	
2:00 PM		Study BIO	Study AMS	Study BIO	Study AMS	Study BIO	
3:00 PM							
4:00 PM		WebEx Class	Study ENG	WebEx Class	Study ENG	WebEx Class	
5:00 PM							
6:00 PM		Study ATH		Study ATH			
7:00 PM							
8:00 PM							
9:00 PM							
10:00 PM							

3. FIND YOUR SPACE

Without the classroom environment to structure your academic interactions, learning can feel very different. That's why we recommend finding, creating, and maintaining an effective study space within which to complete your work. Again, building a routine, in which you study consistently in one space, can help you feel a sense of control over your academic work.

STUDY SPACE

Can you identify a desk or table with room for both a laptop and, potentially, writing instruments? Use pleasant images and motivational quotations to lend positivity to that workspace. Further, aim to work there consistently: habitual work will help reinforce the connection between that space and academic excellence in your mind!

DIGITAL ENVIRONMENTS

Since much of your work may be happening electronically, we encourage you to organize your digital spaces. Consider such tools as Canvas, Google Drive, and Google Calendar. For example: why not use Google Drive to create folders for each of your classes, and sub-categorize assignments and other materials within the folders?



STATE-DEPENDENT LEARNING

The great thing about establishing a solid study space is that it can greatly aid learning! Research supports the idea of state-dependent learning: that the physical state in which we learn something is the environment in which we are most likely able to recall it. Even beyond spaces, other sensory stimuli can help! Writing with a particular color of ink or chewing a specific flavor of gum can be used and reused to help you trigger memories of course content.

4. RESIST MULTITASKING

In the 21st century, we all are constantly multitasking. While multitasking can be beneficial when chatting with friends, referencing online news coverage, and making plans for dinner, it can be detrimental to successfully learning new content, completing time sensitive assignments, and studying for exams. During this time away from in-person classes, be intentional in blocking distractions and focusing on one thing at a time.

ESTABLISH MEDIA EXPECTATIONS

During this time of frequent change, you may be tempted to constantly check news websites or social media. Likewise, being at home, you may want to watch Netflix or other streaming services. Keep in mind, however, that this will likely interfere with your ability to productively focus on your work.

COMMUNICATE

Let your friends and loved ones know about periods of time when you may not be able to respond to texts and/or phone calls. Similar to being in a classroom, your study time should be uninterrupted. Concentration is key to excelling in a remote format.

MAINTAIN ACCOUNTABILITY

Ask someone to help you stay accountable with uninterrupted study! A classmate, close friend, or family member can help you ensure that you are putting in a solid amount of work time to excel academically. When you have someone to stay accountable to, you are more likely to maintain habits that position you for success.



5. AVOID LAST-MINUTE WORK

Nobody works better at the last minute! Especially when at a distance from faculty and peers, it can be challenging to motivate yourself to start an assignment. Tasks can seem overwhelming, particularly when you may not understand what is being asked of you. Instead of procrastinating until the last minute, consider the following:

ASK QUESTIONS

We typically avoid getting started on a task or assignment when we feel frustrated or don't quite understand. The best way to resolve this is to get clarification. Email or chat with your instructor to get the clarity you need.

CONNECT WITH PEERS

Sometimes peers in class can help us better understand material. Set up a meeting via FaceTime or GoogleChat to ask friends if they understand a concept or an assignment. Hearing information from different sources can be beneficial to learning.

BRAINSTORM

Staring at a blank sheet of paper or a blank document can be intimidating. To start, write down everything that you can remember about the topic or assignment. From there, write out questions or problems you still have. This brainstorming technique will help you clarify the areas of learning you still need to focus on.

6. INCENTIVIZE YOUR WORK

During difficult transitions, we may neglect academic responsibilities. However, there are productive ways to cope - one of which is to incentivize your work! What we mean by this is building rewards into your work, so that you feel more motivated and enthusiastic about completing it. Some positive incentives include:

SELF-CARE

Although you should not ignore your work, it is totally okay to take breaks that replenish you. Play with your pets; listen to music; watch a funny movie or TV show. All these activities can help you practice good self-care during this time.

ACCEPTING SUPPORT

Remember that you are not alone in making this transition. Talk with your family members and enlist their help in ensuring you are sticking to your schedule and routine. Reach out to campus support services, and talk to friends. It is okay to acknowledge to your friends and loved ones that you are experiencing challenges: they may have a solution to the issues you are facing.

SETTING GOALS

Build goals, both large and small, into your schoolwork. Break tasks up into smaller sections - sometimes, we may not realize what we can complete in 15-30 minutes of focused work time. Use the SMART format (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, time-bound) to create goals - you will be delighted to cross something off your to-do list!

7. GET ENOUGH SLEEP

Without the structure of the university environment, one of the biggest challenges you may face is maintaining a solid sleep schedule. It may be tempting to sleep in when you do not have to hike across campus to an 8:30 class, but lacking a routine will do you no favors. We suggest a strong awareness of your:

SLEEP HABITS

Many students shy away from morning classes, because they do not consider themselves to be a "morning person." Self-awareness around your sleep habits can be a positive thing - if you know you are more productive or wakeful at certain points of the day, you can schedule your work around that, when possible. Just don't ignore morning time commitments!

SLEEP MANAGEMENT

Be aware of how much sleep you are getting, and whether it is consistent. Lack of sleep can cause irritability, cognitive impairment, and decreased reaction time and accuracy - none of which will be helpful to you in your coursework.

SLEEP HYGIENE

Quality sleep is essential. Avoid napping during daylight hours, aim to wake up at the same time every day, and go to bed at regular times each night. This is what we call "sleep hygiene" - just as many of us have routines for the care of our skin or hair, we also need to have a routine for rest.