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Tips for studying online and at home for university students

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During these uncertain times many universities are pausing face-to-face teaching and university students are having to take online lectures. For some students this might prove quite a challenge.

It may not be easy to regulate your own studying and to utilise online lectures and seminars to their full potential but here are some ways in which you can do so. This is a general overview for all students, but your university may have specific measures in place so be sure to keep checking your emails and online portal for updates.

1. Engage with your learning

In the same way you would take notes when attending a lecture, it is a good idea to do the same while listening to or watching an online lecture. Sit in a comfortable place, have a notebook and pen handy and try to keep any other distractions to a minimum.

Take some time to look at your timetable and work out a study schedule to ensure you are well-prepared to attend all your seminars and lectures online. Do the relevant reading beforehand and ask questions if there is anything you aren't sure about.

2. Coordinate group chats

There are a number of online tools such as Skype or Zoom that you can download for free and enable you to coordinate video chats with groups of people. Use these programs to set up study groups with coursemates so you can spend some time discussing ideas, analysing texts together and swapping study tips.

This is a great way to keep in touch with other students in your class, and for making sure you are maintaining the collaborative aspect of your university course. It also helps to add some social contact so you don't feel too isolated studying alone.

Ensure that you plan what you are discussing beforehand and try to stick to the topic so that the discussion remains productive and you don't get distracted chatting about other things.

3. Keep in touch with your tutor and lecturers

You may no longer be able to see your tutors during their regular office hours, but ensure that you keep in contact with them on a regular basis. Perhaps an email once a week or even every few days to ensure you are of any developments in your courses. Additionally, if you are feeling anxious or stressed, speaking to your tutor could help to alleviate any concerns you might have.

Also remember to keep in touch with lecturers and seminar leaders to ensure that you have up-to-date reading lists and are looking in the correct places for lecture notes and slides. Don't hesitate to get in contact if you have any concerns about your learning, but be patient when expecting a response. Your tutors are probably under immense pressure to prepare lectures for online delivery so give them time to get back to you.

[Video: Five essential studying tips for students](#)

[How to stop procrastinating – from a procrastination psychologist](#)

[The real experience of an online-only university student](#)

[5 revision techniques to help you ace exam season \(plus 7 more unusual approaches\)](#)

4. Ensure you have all the right tools to study

Online lectures will require a fairly well-functioning computer and a good internet connection. Some students already own these things but if you don't, speak to your tutor or your student services office about how this can be facilitated. There may be spare laptop computers you can borrow, or you could join a small group of other students to study together.

Make sure you have enough stationery (pens, highlighters, notebooks etc) and the correct books or articles to study from, whether hard copies or digital editions.

Check your online portal daily for updates on classes and for any study tools that the university is providing to help you.

5. Think about your work space at home

If you're used to studying in the campus library, you might find it quite difficult to transition to studying at home for the majority of the time, but there are a few things that you can do to get yourself in the working mindset.

First, identify an area where you can sit and work. Some students are lucky enough to have a desk but if you don't, any surface where you can sit comfortably with your laptop and notes is good enough. Then ensure you keep all the things you need nearby so that you don't have to keep getting up.

Many universities around the world have kept their libraries open, so this could be an option, but try not to get too close to your fellow students. It is also important to stick to the latest guidelines about leaving your house in the country you're in, so be sure to check whether this is something you are allowed to do.

6. Take regular breaks

This is common advice but it is now more important than ever when you are studying in your living space. You don't have to stick to a 9-5 schedule if that doesn't work for you, but identify the hours you are most productive and centre your work day around that.

Taking regular breaks during the day keeps your mind fresh and is one of the easiest ways to ensure you don't burn out. Step away from your laptop every hour or so and do something you enjoy, whether it's reading a chapter of your book, watching a little TV or playing a game. Try to get out at least once a day for a walk (if you are able to) and give yourself things to look forward to each day.

It is also important to have a clear cut-off point when you finish studying for the day. Pack up your study materials at the end of the day if you can, so that you can relax properly for the evening without your books staring at you.

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