

# STUDY TIPS

## ADJUSTING YOUR STUDY HABITS DURING COVID-19

*We will get through this together.*

Things may feel out of control right now. You may face a lot of unknowns and disruptions. Try to be patient with yourself, your classmates and your instructors during this time. Take care of your well being first. Making a plan and adjusting your studying may help you feel even a little sense of control.

### USE THIS RESOURCE AS A STARTING POINT

In this guide, we will talk about:

- Staying organized
- Avoiding multitasking
- Making the most of video lectures
- Setting a schedule
- Trading your strategies for new ones
- Working with a group or team
- Staying connected to other people

### YOUR STUDY HABITS MAY NEED TO CHANGE

While more of your coursework and teamwork have to be online and remote, here are some strategies to keep in mind.

## 1. STAYING ORGANIZED

With so many things changing in your courses, you might relive that first-week-of-class confusion at finals-week pace.

**Here are some things you might want to keep track of for each class:**

***Are in-person parts of the class changing?***

- What are the in-person parts of this course? (lecture, lab, etc.)
- Where can you find it or how do you access it? (live-stream, lecture capture, etc.)
- Is it at a specific time or can you watch it anytime?

***Are assignments changing?***

- Are there new due dates?
- Is how you are submitting your assignments changing?
- Are any quizzes or exams being offered virtually?

***What should you do if you need help?***

- Is your course offering virtual office hours? When and on what platform?
- Is there an online forum for asking questions?

## 2. AVOIDING MULTITASKING

If you're doing more work on your own and your time is less structured, you might be more tempted to multitask. Many people think they can do multiple things at once. But research shows us that only about 2 percent of the population can multitask. Even if you feel like you're multitasking, you are probably not. Really, you are just switching between tasks very quickly. Some call this "microtasking."

**The downsides of multitasking and microtasking:**

- Assignments take longer. When your attention drifts elsewhere, say Instagram, it takes more time to get back to work. You have to get familiar with your assignment again, find your spot, remember what you were doing next, etc.
- You are more likely to make mistakes. Distractions and switching between tasks tires out the brain.
- You will remember less. When your brain is divided, you are less able to commit what you are learning to long-term memory because it does not get encoded properly into your brain.

### WHAT TO DO INSTEAD

When you need to study something important consider the magic of monotasking.

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

### 3. MAKING THE MOST OF VIDEO LECTURES

- Stick to your instructor’s schedule as much as you can. Staying on a schedule can emit a feeling of normalcy and prevent you from falling way behind.
- Find out how to ask questions. Is there a chat feature? Is there a discussion forum?
- Close distracting tabs and apps. Humans are not as good at multitasking as they think.
- 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 cause lower scores on assessments. Faster playback speeds are worse for complex, multistep material, which for most of you, lectures probably are.

### 4. SETTING A SCHEDULE

As the situation unfolds, you may have fewer social commitments, group meetings or work hours. 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. Include time for exercise and self care.

SCHEDULE EXAMPLE

	Schedule Activity	Course Tasks	Personal & Self-Care
8 a.m.			Shower, Breakfast
9 a.m.	Call in for remote lecture		
10 a.m.		Read Chapter 3	
11 a.m.			Break—Video call with friend
Noon			Lunch
1 p.m.		Read Chapter 4	
2 p.m.	Recap lecture with classmate		

### 5. TRADING YOUR STRATEGIES FOR NEW ONES

Your routines may have to adjust during this time. Look for ways to adapt your usual habits and form new ones.

If you usually study in a coffee shop or library, ask yourself what kind of environment helps you study. See if you can recreate that at home. Maybe it is studying in a chair, rather than on your bed or couch, or moving to a new spot when you change tasks. Consider a white noise app if you feel you need background noise.

Do you always study in groups? Try a virtual or even phone-based study session with your group.

If you thrive on tight timelines, but now have a more open schedule, think about how working with others or setting up a schedule can recreate that for you. When that gets hard, see if you can even do 15 minutes at a time.

### 6. WORKING WITH A GROUP OR TEAM

- Remote collaboration will look a little different, but it is definitely possible.
- Try not to procrastinate. That group project may be out-of-sight, out-of-mind if you are not seeing each other regularly. Resist the urge to put it off. Make small progress and stay in touch.
- Meet regularly. This is important if you usually touch base during a class or lab. Consider a quick text on your group chat about progress every couple of days. Ideally, have real conversations over video any week you’re working together.
- Set a purpose for your meetings and use a shared notes doc. Meetings might feel different when using video, even if your team was great at working informally in the past. Try to set the purpose of your meeting in advance. Take notes in a shared doc so you can all contribute and follow along.
- Keep videos open when you can. As long as you can see whatever you need to collaborate, aim to keep the video visible on your computer screen. It’ll help you see the expressions of your teammates and stay connected to each other.
- Check on each other and ask for backup. If someone has been absent from your group meetings or chat, ask them directly if they are still able to participate in the project. If you are not getting responses within a day or two, let your instructor know. It is not being petty, it is your team’s responsibility.

## 7. STAYING CONNECTED TO OTHER PEOPLE

Even if we limit how much face-to-face time we spend with others on campus, connecting with family and friends might be more important than ever. And staying in touch with instructors, classmates and group mates is still important for continuing classwork.

### Here are a few ideas:

- Schedule video calls with friends and family. Talking with loved ones is often helpful when you are stressed or nervous about something. Taking a break to have a laugh is also important.
- Use Hangouts in g-chat, to connect with classmates to talk through a tough problem.
- Attend virtual office hours or study groups so you can stay up on your coursework.

### *Please remember, this will pass.*

If COVID-19 has disrupted your travel plans, ended a lab experiment you were excited about, or for any reason feels like it came at the worst possible time, remember: this is temporary. You will find your way when it settles down. You will get back on track, and things will get back to normal. We do not know when, but it will happen. Until then, take a deep breath, do your best, get some rest and wash your hands.

# MORE INFO

## BE PREPARED DURING COVID-19

[southeastern.edu/remoteteaching](https://southeastern.edu/remoteteaching)

[southeastern.edu/coronavirus](https://southeastern.edu/coronavirus)



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