



## Time Management Strategies for Online Learning

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Online courses often present greater time management challenges than in-person classes. Below are a few time-management tips with the online quarter in mind.

### 1. Give Yourself (and Your Technology) Extra Time

For most students and instructors, Spring Quarter 2020 will be their first experience with teaching and taking courses entirely online. It will take some time for everyone to fully learn all the features of the programs involved, and this may mean that basic aspects of taking classes take a bit longer than they would in person. Additionally, with increased strain on ISPs due to stay-at-home orders, you may find your internet connection to be less reliable than you are used to. The best way to deal with technological issues is to give yourself plenty of time to finish tasks so that you aren't derailed by a last-minute service interruption. If you think something will take you two days to finish, give yourself three and thank yourself later.

### 2. Make a Specific Study Plan

Online learning offers a lot of flexibility, but self-discipline is important as it can be easier to procrastinate in online courses and you can quickly get behind. Block out specific times in your calendar to engage with your online coursework and jump into Canvas regularly. A good ratio is for every 1 unit of coursework, block out a 2-3 hour study session. Keep track of dates and assignments using the [Calendar](#) tool, which displays assignments across all of your classes. The more specific you can be with what you want to accomplish in each time block, the more likely you are to follow through.

### 3. Keep a Consistent Lecture Schedule

Many courses are offering "asynchronous" lectures that you can watch whenever you like rather than participating in a live format. This can be a benefit to your schedule, but if you don't have a particular time set aside to watch the recordings each week, they can easily pile up and become difficult to get through. Make a consistent schedule to watch your lectures and it will be much easier to keep up.

### 4. Set Time Limits

When you are working a) mostly by yourself, and b) mostly on computers, focus and concentration can be hard to come by. One way to counter this effect is to break your study sessions into shorter, focused sections. It is easier to maintain focus for twenty minutes than it is for an hour, so working for twenty minutes at a time with short breaks in-between may help you get through material more efficiently than trying to work for an hour straight (this approach is sometimes referred to as [The Pomodoro Technique](#)). Short breaks can also help you avoid eye strain and muscle stiffness, which are often associated with long periods of time spent at a computer.

## 5. Spread Your Work Out Over the Whole Week

It can be tempting to try and load all of your work onto a few days so that you have more time for other priorities during the week. Please avoid this tendency. You will generally be more successful, and under less stress, if you distribute your work across the whole week and do smaller amounts every day as opposed to trying to cram. While other responsibilities may prevent you from focusing on school every day, spread out your work as much as possible and you should see better results.

## 6. Plan Out Your Whole Day

Have you ever thought “I have all day” in the morning only to find yourself struggling to get an assignment done by midnight? Feeling like we have an endless supply of time is one of the biggest obstacles to managing time effectively. Planning out your whole day (including meals, breaks, self-care, and flexible time) can help you stay on task while leaving room for all the various things you need to attend to in a day. While you may not follow every day’s schedule to a t, you will be more mindful of all of your commitments and more likely to focus on the things that are most important to you.

## 7. Keep it Realistic

Just as having too little on your schedule leads to procrastination, having too much on your daily schedule can lead to burnout and negative self-evaluation. Much like with New Year’s Resolutions, we tend to overestimate our energy levels and underestimate how long it takes to set new habits. Be patient with yourself and focus on establishing the good habits that will build towards greater success over time. It will take some time and practice to find the right balance for you, so don’t get discouraged if you have some early setbacks.

## 8. Remember That You’re Not Alone

It’s only natural to feel less connected to the support networks that you’re used to having around you on campus. Remember that your instructors, classmates, and support staff are all here working through this trying time alongside you. Your access to support might be different, and in some cases may take longer to access, but it is still here. The earlier you reach out to your support resources, the more helpful they will be to you.