**How to study from home**

# Creating a Productive Workspace

One of the struggles that can occur when you work from home is adapting your home environment into a productive work environment. Here are some tips for creating an effective workspace in your home.

1. **Have a designated studying area:** *Only* use it for studying; your brain will eventually turn it into a habit that when you sit down there, you get into study mode. This is more effective when its somewhere other than your bedroom and is considered distraction free.
2. **Keep your area clean:** A clean workspace reduces distractions and lessens the chances of procrastinating by doing other chores that are “more important” when in reality you just want to avoid studying. Also, a neat and well organized environment helps create a professional atmosphere and helps set your mind at ease.
3. **Keep your regular routines:** Get up in the morning like you would for work or school; shower, eat, and get ready as you would if it were just another day. This will wake you up and put you in the mindset that you need to get to work. Dress like you are working and you will have the mindset to work as well.
4. **Build good time management habits:** Designate times to study if you don’t have pre-determined times for your classed. Find out when your most productive time is (ie. are you a morning or afternoon person) and use that same time every day to study. Keep personal time and study time as separate as possible
5. **UNPLUG**: Minimize distractions caused from sources like social media by turning off your phone, setting it to do not disturb or by downloading an app that will block other distracting apps such as Facebook, Instagram, and games.

# Staying Motivated

1. **Set up a rewards system**: Take a 5-minute break, grab a snack, walk your dog or switch your laundry over... but only after completing a difficult task.
2. **Take breaks from your work area:** Taking short breaks can increase productivity and creativity. Rather than using your breaks to watch videos on YouTube, use this time to get away from your work area. This will help you from “accidently” taking breaks in your work space.
3. **Peer support/Accountability Partners:** Have regular contact with your classmates to help coach and motivate each other to complete tasks and follow through on commitments.
4. **Overcommunicate:** Take time out of your day to call your family, a friend, or even a neighbor. We are all in this together and as time goes on you can often feel disconnected. Make sure to support each other in every way possible.
5. **Reach out to your professors:** When face to face classes are suspended, your professors will make the effort to be more accessible by other means, so do not hesitate to contact them.

# Staying Organized

1. **Plan out your work schedule the night before:** Spending time trying to figure out what you will do that day can take away from accomplishing those tasks and become counterproductive. Having a solidified schedule right out of the gate will make it feel more official when you wake up and get started on it.
2. **Have an ongoing to-do list:** When working remotely you will find yourself forgetting about deliverables or tasks that were asked of you when it's not done in a face-to-face context, so writing down everything that needs to be done can keep you on task. It's also a feel-good moment when you get to cross things off.

# Working as a team/group

1. **Choose your tech**: Pick a platform that allows everyone to work together and communicate effectively as a team. Having a constant place everyone can go and keep up to date on things is important, and communication will be a key to success. Recommendations: Microsoft Teams, Slack, Trello, Podio. During this time, do not pressure group members to meet in person.
2. **Use video conferencing:** You should also try to be communicating as much as possible via video conferencing (more in etiquette section). The personal touch of being able to see each other will go a long way in motivating each other and ensure each other understand the material being discussed. Recommendations: Zoom, Google meets, Microsoft Teams, skype
3. **Keep each other accountable**: Use tactics such as morning emails to everyone outlining what your most important tasks are and what you will accomplish that day as a promise to your team.
4. **Revise team contracts:** If your team has a ‘Team Contract’, now is a good time to update it to reflect new agreements while finishing out the semester remotely.

# Video Conferencing Etiquette

1. **Use headphones when available:** This minimizes the chances of echo or reverb and significantly improves the meeting quality.
2. **Avoid touching the mic:** Handling noise is very disruptive -- if you need to move your mic or adjust the volume on your headphones, make sure you mute your user first.
3. **Mute yourself when you are not speaking:** This is to prevent filtration of distracting background noises (and also to comfortably sip your coffee).
4. **Be courteous and stay present**: Avoid checking your phone, e-mail etc. during your meeting. Yes, the rest of the team can tell.
5. **Don’t interrupt other people when they’re speaking or attempt to speak over them**: It won't work. In turn, give some room for the others to interject/respond after you are done speaking, and look for visual cues when cameras are on.
6. **Use a “blur background” feature**: Most video services have this feature; it helps to prevent distractions if you’re using a camera or to hide the messy room behind you if you didn’t follow rule #2.