

Working Well During Physical Distancing

You may be experiencing new challenges as you adapt to working at home during physical distancing and a stressful broader context. Here are practical tips to help you optimize your time and work.

Maintain your daily routines.

- Get up and go to bed at the **same times** every day.
- Go through your usual morning routine including **getting dressed!** ☺ Put on your go-to-school or work clothes, or even your study-at-home clothes – but not your day off clothes.
- Keep mealtimes consistent and try to **eat well**.
- **Create a “start time” and “end time”** to your work and study day. Start time could be when you pull up to your desk to work. End time could be tidying your desk before making dinner, or closing your laptop an hour before bed and listening to music.

Create structure in your day and week.

- Have **set study or writing times** such as 2-hour blocks of dedicated desk time.
- Book planned **down time** to enjoy a hobby or rejuvenating activity.
- Plan to **socialize deliberately** (online/phone of course).
- Include planned **exercise**. Solo or online simultaneously with others.
- **Give the week shape**. For example, do something special on Saturdays or Sundays to mark the weekend and turn your attention toward something you enjoy.

Anticipate distraction.

- Create your **optimal work environment** as best you can (quiet, or music or nature sounds, work solo or in company, prep your space etc.).
- **Let other people know** when you will be working and when they can expect to hear back from you.
- **Silence your phone** and email alerts and put your phone away during your designated work times. Check your messages when you are finished. If you are concerned about being easy to reach in an emergency, pre-arrange a method to bypass this (e.g. phone do not disturb setting.)
- Put distracting thoughts on a **“parking lot page”** to come back to at the end of your planned study/writing time.

Utilize work, writing and calming strategies.

- Use **time management** techniques. Backwards plan your projects or exam preparation.
- Plan your work blocks in **advance** of sitting down to them.
- Try the Pomodoro technique (25 min on, **5 min physical break**, repeat).
- Utilize campus **resources**: [Academic Success](#), [Assignment Calculator](#), [5 Tips for Remote Learning](#)
- **Graduate students**: use project management and [pre-writing strategies](#) and consider joining a [Graduate Writing Group](#).
- **Exercise** and consider meditation or breathing techniques.

Be compassionate with yourself.

- You may find concentration is challenged by the current situation and of course your attention will be drawn to the crucial issues we are all facing. That said, you are still a student and person living your life and you will benefit from diving into productive rewarding activities. Include **stress management** practices and some allowance for time to reflect and process.

Further Resources: [Student Life Services](#) [Writing Centres](#) [Off-Campus support](#)

You can do this. It is a challenge of adaptation. And this too shall pass!