

Adjusting your study habits during COVID-19.

We're all in this together.

Things may feel out-of-control right now. You may be facing a lot of unknowns and disruptions. Try to be patient with yourself, your classmates, and your instructors during this time. Take care of your wellbeing 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'll talk about:

1. **Staying organized**
2. **Avoiding multitasking**
3. **Making the most of video lectures**
4. **Setting a schedule**
5. **Trading your strategies for new ones**
6. **Working with a group or team**
7. **Staying connected to other people**

Your study habits may need to change. Use the strategies in this guide to help you adapt.

1. Staying organized

With so many things changing in your courses, you might be reliving that first-week-of-class confusion at finals-week pace. Here are some things you might want to keep track of for each class:

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're 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?

One example of how to keep track:

	Course 1	Course 2	Course 3
Important dates			Paper due Friday
Big changes	No lab Live lecture at 8am	Recorded lectures	Group paper, no presentation
Important links	Lecture links	Lecture links	Group paper files

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% of the population can multitask. Even if you feel like you're multitasking, you're probably not... really, you're switching between tasks very quickly (some call this "micro-tasking").

The downsides of multitasking and microtasking:

- **Assignments take longer.** Each time you come back to an assignment (from Instagram for example), you have to get familiar with it, find your spot, remember what you were going to do next, etc.
- **You're more likely to make mistakes.** Distractions and switching between tasks tires out the brain.
- **You'll remember less.** When your brain is divided, you're less able to commit what you're learning to long-term memory (because [it doesn't 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- or 50-minute periods and then reward yourself with 5- or 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 will help you have 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! (See #2).
- **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 result in lower scores on assessments. Faster playback speeds are worse for complex, multi-step material (which most of your lectures probably are). Remember: this is all about 1.5x. There hasn't even been research on 2x playback speed, which is probably even worse.

4. Setting a schedule:

As the situation unfolds, you will have fewer social commitments, group meetings, or possibly, work hours.

- **Setting a schedule** for yourself can help provide structure and keep you motivated.
- [This template](#) can help you organize your time if you don't already keep a weekly or daily calendar.
- **Include time for exercise and self-care.**



5. Trading your strategies for new ones

Your routines may have to adjust during this time. **Look for ways to adapt your usual habits or form new ones.** For example:

- 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's studying in a chair, rather than on your bed or couch, or moving to a new spot when you change tasks. If you feel you need background noise, consider a white noise app.
- If 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 fifteen 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 aren't seeing each other regularly. Resist the urge to put it off. Make small progress and stay in touch.
- **Meet regularly,** especially if you usually touch base during 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. Check out tools you have access to as students.
- **Set a purpose for meetings and use a shared notes doc.** Meetings might feel different when using video, even if your team was really good 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're still able to participate in the project. If you aren't getting responses within a day or two, let your instructor know. Know it isn't being petty, it's 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 continued classwork. Here are a few ideas:

- **Schedule video calls with friends and family.** Talking with loved ones is often really helpful when you're stressed or nervous about something. Taking a break to have a laugh is also important.
- **Use [Zoom](#) to connect with classmates** to talk through a tough problem



Please remember, this will pass.

- If COVID 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'll find your way when it settles down. You'll get back on track, and things will get back to normal.
- We don't know when, but it will happen. Until then, take a deep breath, do your best, get some rest, and [wash your hands](#).
- And check out [Well-Being In Stressful Times](#), a guide for resources to keep your spirits up, find accurate information, and entertain kids (or yourself).

Helpful links:

The CDC's [Preventing COVID](#) page.

New Hampshire Department of Health & Human Services [COVID-19 information](#).

Free, reliable sources of [NH](#) and [national](#) Coronavirus news.

Governor Sununu's [emergency orders](#) (including unemployment and other consumer protections).

The [Disaster Distress Hotline](#) is a free crisis counseling line available 24/7 for anyone experiencing emotional distress. Call 1-800-985-5990 or text TalkWithUs to 66746 to connect with a trained crisis counselor.

Contact your college for online learning resources and support:

College	Library	Student Services
 GBCC Great Bay Community College	greatbay.edu/student-services/library	greatbay.edu/student-services
 LRCC LAKES REGION Community College	lrcc.edu/student-resources/student-life/library/	lrcc.edu/student-resources/student-support/
 MCC MANCHESTER COMMUNITY COLLEGE	library.mccnh.edu/home	www.mccnh.edu/services
 NCC Nashua Community College	nashuacc.edu/academics/library-and-media-services	nashuacc.edu/student-services
 NHTI Concord's Community College	nhti.edu/student-resources/library	nhti.edu/student-resources
 RVCC RIVER VALLEY Community College	https://rivervalley.libguides.com/Library	rivervalley.edu/student-support/
 WMCC White Mountains Community College	wmcc.edu/fortier-library/	wmcc.edu/student-experience/services-at-a-glance/

