

Adjusting your study habits for remote learning? Try treating it like a job!

The COVID-19 outbreak has changed how UH courses will be taught, so you're going to need to change the way you learn and study. **Not sure how to get started?** Try thinking about studying like it is a job! When you start a new job, you invest the time to learn the ropes and impress the boss. Now it's time to learn new study habits to finish the semester **STRONG!**

Add structure to your day

A job usually has set hours and set tasks to do. With this new learning environment, make a weekly schedule using Google Calendar - free if you have a gmail account.

- 1) First, put in the times of your classes. Even though they are not meeting in person, it is good to keep this same schedule to be consistent. During this "in class" time, you can watch lectures and videos assigned by your professor. Listen closely and take notes as you usually would. Have this task be your only one at this time, and minimize distractions, just like you would in a live class.
- 2) Next, put in times to study/learn for each class. In Google calendar, make these a different color and set notifications to get reminders of these times. How much time should you put in for each class? Think about what you were doing previously in the semester. You might want to add a few hours a week while you get adjusted to these new circumstances.
- 3) Put in other tasks that will occupy you throughout the week - work, family commitments, meetings, etc.
- 4) Make sure you add time for leisure activities - if you schedule them, it will elevate their importance and make sure that you take time for them during this stressful time.
- 5) Now, attempt to follow your new schedule. Remember, this is a "new job" for you so it may take a little adjusting. Don't try to schedule every hour, so you have some flexibility.

In addition to an overview of your week, it is helpful to see what assignments you have coming up this week. Use this [Weekly Assignment sheet](#) to plan your tasks for the week, and then plug these into your study times.

Remember to think about homework, quizzes, writing papers, and studying for exams. Check your updated syllabi carefully because things will probably have shifted around. There will probably be more online resources and materials than before. Write everything on this sheet for the week to focus on what is coming up first.

Other ways to add structure to your day include eating meals and sleeping on a consistent schedule. Our bodies do not like change! Taking care of your body will help your concentration and memory while you are studying.

You can also add structure to your study time by alternating periods of study with break periods. [Focus Booster](#) is an app that uses the Pomodoro method (alternating timed periods of study and breaks) to help you get more accomplished.

Be Accountable

Another aspect of employment that pertains to online learning is accountability. At a job, we are accountable to our supervisor, coworkers, and customers. When studying remotely, Build in accountability to others and to yourself. Here are some examples:

- 1) Be accountable to your professor. Let your professor know how you are doing, and whether you have questions about the class material; generally be as involved as you can under these conditions.
- 2) See if there is a method built into the class to discuss material with other people. If there is, review the material on your own first, and then set a meeting time to discuss it with others. Knowing that you will have to be knowledgeable about the material will help you prepare better - this is the accountability part.

- 3) Set a goal per week of how much you wish to study for each class. Write your goal where you can see it and put a mark next to each hour that you study that week.
- 4) It is often good to tell a friend what your study goals are for the week. Your friend can tell you the same, and at the end of the week, let each other know if you reached your goal, why or why not, and then set a goal for the following week.
- 5) Use the [Forest](#) app – this app grows a “tree” when you are doing school work, to help you be more focused. If you are focused for enough minutes, it will plant a real tree for you. Being accountable to this tree may help!

Give yourself Rewards

At a job, some rewards might be a paycheck, meeting your goals, a feeling of satisfaction, etc. How can we bring the concept of rewards into studying?

- 1) First, change the order of your schedule to do the tasks FIRST that you don't like and the tasks LAST that you do like. These later tasks become rewards for the first ones. For example, if you really hate writing papers and love Physics, you might put Physics last so that you can look forward to it while working on your paper.
- 2) Other examples of rewards are talking to a friend, listening to music, or having a snack. If you normally spread these things out during your day, try putting them AFTER something that you don't like to do.
- 3) [Freedom](#) is an app that allows you to block your own access to distracting websites, for the amount of time that you say. Then these fun sites will become a reward.

Work the Environment

A job has a known “work” environment - a building, a place, an address, paint colors, and smells. These factors remind you that you are at work and work tasks need to be done. How can you recreate this at home?

- 1) Pick a study spot that is consistent, even if it is at the kitchen table. Gather your materials around you that you will need. When you are here, you are “at work”. When you are not here, you are not at work. Put something near you to remind you that you are a student at UH - a pennant, a sports schedule, a red t-shirt. Now you are a student at UH, even though you are not at UH.
- 2) On your computer, put your academic materials on one browser, say Chrome, and put leisure materials on another browser, say Firefox. This will help you to keep some separation between work and non-work.
- 3) The environment of school has many resources that are available to you, even if you are not on campus. For example, your advisors are still accessible to you. Tutoring at LAUNCH is still accessible to you. The library has eBooks that you can read online.
- 4) Sometimes your home environment is not very conducive to studying. You may need to focus more carefully on schoolwork in order to get it done. Some ways to concentrate more fully are:
 - Choose a task to do while you read, like making flashcards, marking the material in different colors (theories in pink, examples in green, equations in blue), solving the practice problems that you encounter in the book, speaking the material aloud, or squeezing a stress ball.
 - Carve out study time and ask other family members to respect these hours.

This online/remote student job will be temporary. But when we return to in person classes, maybe you will have developed some additional tools that you can use in the future. Everyone at UH is supporting you and your success during this difficult time. Please reach out to a staff member, faculty member, or fellow student when you need help. **Go Coogs!**