

**ADJUSTING YOUR
STUDY HABITS
DURING COVID-19**

**WE'LL GET THROUGH
THIS TOGETHER.**



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY
College of Arts & Sciences

**WE BUILD
INNOVATORS**

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 even help you feel a little sense of control.

Use this resource as a starting point.

IN THIS GUIDE, WE'LL TALK ABOUT:

- Staying organized
- Avoiding multitasking
- Making the most of video lectures
- Setting a schedule
- Trading your old strategies for new ones
- Working with a group or team
- Staying connected to other people

Your study habits may need to change.

While more of your coursework and teamwork have to be online and remote, here are some strategies to keep in mind:

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.

TIPS & RESOURCES

Here are some things you might want to keep track of for each class:

Are in-person parts of the class changing?

- What are the in-person parts of the course? (lecture, lab, etc.)
- Where can you find it or how do you access it? (live-stream, recording)
- Is it at a specific time or can you access it any time?

Are assignments changing?

- Are there new due dates?
- Is the way you submit 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 discussion board for asking questions?

One example of how to keep track:

| | Class 1 | Class 2 | Class 3 |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Important Dates | | | Paper Due Friday |
| Big Changes | No Lab, Online Lecture | Discussion Optional, Recorded Lecture | Can Do Paper Instead of Group Project |
| Connecting | Lecture & Office Hours Link | Discussion Link, Lecture Link | Group Paper Folder |

2. AVOID MULTITASKING

If you are doing more work on your own and your time is less structured, you might be tempted to multitask. Many people think they can do multiple things at once. But research shows that only about 2% of people can multitask. Even if you feel like you're multitasking, you're probably just switching between tasks quickly (sometimes called "microtasking").

TIPS & RESOURCES

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 the brain.

You'll remember less.

- When your brain is divided, you're less able to commit what you're reading 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 monotasking—focusing on one thing at a time.
- Take breaks between tasks.
- Work for 25- or 50-minute periods, 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 schedule will help you have a feeling of normalcy and prevent you from falling behind.
 - Find out how to ask questions. E-mail or call your instructor to find out.
 - Close distracting tabs and apps. Humans are not as good at multitasking as they think. (See No. 2 on the previous page.)
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TIPS & RESOURCES

Remember to keep some things in “real time,” just as if you were in class:

Taking notes:

- Continue to take notes as you would if you were there in person.

Watch recordings at normal speed:

- Research shows that a 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 research is about 1.5x playback. There hasn't even been research on 2x playback speed, which may be even worse.

4. SETTING A SCHEDULE

- As the situation unfolds, you may have fewer social commitments, group meetings, or work hours.
- Setting a schedule for yourself can help provide structure and keep you motivated.
- If you don't already keep a weekly or daily calendar, try something like the example below to organize your time, including time for exercise and self-care.

| | Scheduled Activity | Course Tasks | Personal/Self-Care |
|---------|----------------------------|----------------|----------------------------|
| 8 a.m. | | | Shower, Breakfast |
| 9 a.m. | Call in for Remote Lecture | | |
| 10 a.m. | | Read Chapter 3 | |
| 11 a.m. | | | Break: Video Call w/Friend |
| 12 p.m. | | | Lunch |
| 1 p.m. | | Read Chapter 4 | |
| 2 p.m. | Recap Lecture w/Classmates | | |

TIPS & RESOURCES

5. TRADING OLD 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 re-create that at home. Maybe it's studying in a chair rather than on your bed, 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 (Zoom, Skype, etc.) 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 re-create that for you. When that gets hard, see if you can do, say, 15 minutes at a time.

6. WORKING WITH A GROUP OR TEAM.

Remote collaboration will look a little different, but it's definitely possible.

Some guidelines:

- **Try not to procrastinate.** The 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 test on your group chat about progress every couple of days. Ideally, have real conversations via video any week you are working together. Check out tools you have access to as Texas Tech students.
 - **Set the purpose for meetings in advance.** Meetings might feel different when using video, even if your team was really good at working informally before. Use and take notes in a shared doc so all can contribute and follow along.
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TIPS & RESOURCES

6. WORKING WITH A GROUP OR TEAM, *continued.*

- **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 that 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. 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, too.
- **Use Zoom** to connect with classmates to talk through a tough problem.
- **Attend virtual office hours or study groups** to stay up on your coursework.

PLEASE REMEMBER: THIS WILL PASS.

If COVID-19 has disrupted your travel plans, ended a lab experiment you were excited about, or for any reason makes you feel like it came at the worst possible time, remember: This is temporary. You'll find your way when things settle 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.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

TEXAS TECH RESOURCES

- [Student Health Questions](#)
- [Student Health Virtual Clinic](#)
- [Student eLearning Resources](#)
- [University Student Housing](#)
- [TTU COVID-19 Updates](#)