

GUIDE TO ADJUSTING YOUR STUDY HABITS DURING COVID-19

We know you may be facing a lot of unknowns and disruptions. North Park staff and faculty are here to support you during this time. Please take care of your wellbeing first. Making a plan and adjusting your study habits may help as we begin the transition to online learning.

In this guide, we'll talk about:

- Staying organized
 - Avoiding multitasking
 - Making the most of video lectures
 - Setting a schedule
 - New routines and strategies
 - Working with a group or team
 - Staying connected to other people
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1. Staying Organized

As courses adjust schedules and make changes, you may find it feels like the first week of a new semester. Gather new or changing information and start organizing early.

Here are some things to keep track of:

Are in-person parts of the class changing?

- Faculty have moved their face-to-face courses online.
- Some faculty may use O365 Teams or Big Blue Button for virtual meetings
- Your instructor will inform you of a specific time that the class will meet.
- Check with your instructor if recordings will be available for future viewing.

Are assignments changing?

- Assignment due dates are posted in your Canvas course. Your instructor will communicate any changes made to due dates.
- All assignments will be submitted electronically.
- All quizzes and exams will be held on Canvas.

What should you do if you need help?

- Most online courses will have virtual office hours. Be sure to check in with your instructor for more information about their availability.
- Most online courses will have a general forum discussion board. If you have questions or need technical support for Canvas reach out to [Center for Online Education](#).

2. Avoid Multitasking

As you do more work on your own and your time is less structured, you may feel the urge to multitask. While switching back and forth on assignments can feel productive, it actually takes you away from completing tasks.

Downsides to Multitasking

- **Assignments take longer.** Each time you come back to an assignment, you need to get familiar with it again, find your place, remember what you were doing, etc.
- **Making more mistakes.** Distractions and switching between tasks tire out the brain.
- **Remembering less.** When your brain is divided, you're less able to commit what you're learning to long-term memory.

What to do Instead

- Focusing on one thing at a time
- Take breaks between tasks
- Focus on a task 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 professor's schedule as closely as possible.** Staying on a schedule will help you have a feeling of normalcy and prevent you from falling behind.
- **Find out how to ask questions.** Is there a chat feature? Is there a discussion forum?

- **Close distracting tabs, apps, and notifications.** Humans are not as good at multitasking as they think! (See #2 above.)
- **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.

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. Include time for exercise and self-care.

	Scheduled Activity	Course Tasks	Personal/ Self-care
8am			Shower, breakfast
9am	Call in remote lecture		
10am		Read chapter 3	
11am			Break – video call with friend
12pm			Lunch
1pm		Read chapter 4	
2pm	Recap lecture with classmate		

5. New Routines and Strategies

Your routines and strategies will need to change and adjust during this time. Think about your normal study routines and look for ways to 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 at a table or desk 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 video or phone 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.

6. Working with Group

Remote collaboration can look 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.

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.

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.

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 professor know.

7. Stay Connected

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 Microsoft Teams to connect with classmates to talk through a tough problem.

Attend virtual office hours or study groups so that you can stay up on your coursework.

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.

Additional Resources

[NPU Updates on COVID-19](#)

[Protection Yourself from COVID-19](#)

[Center for Online Education](#)

[Counseling Support Services](#)

[Health Services](#)

[Disability Resources](#)

[Faculty & Staff Directory](#)
