Tips for Adjusting to Online Courses

The transition to courses in an online format is a big adjustment for most students. The following tips and resources may assist you as you navigate this new territory. Please contact Disability Support Services if you have any questions about this information. We are here to support you!

Staying organized
- Create folders/files in a way that makes sense to you.
- Keep a copy of everything you submit in case you have a technology problem — even your discussion forum posts. You will be able to resubmit if you have a copy saved!
- Loyola’s Help Desk is available! Call 410-617-5555 between 9 am and 7 pm
- Create a work area that is as clean and organized as possible, based on the space you have available at home. If you do not have a room to yourself, consider ways to create a barrier around your work area.

Managing your time
- **Creating a schedule**
  - Just as you had a schedule for attending face-to-face classes, create and maintain a schedule for attending online class sessions, studying, and completing assignments. Treat those blocks of time as seriously as you would a face-to-face class meeting and let others know you are unavailable during those times.
  - Think about what time of day you study and focus best and adapt your schedule to complete as much work during this time as possible.
  - Continue to use a calendar system. Check to see if assignment deadlines have changed and what assignments have been added to your courses and enter those dates in your calendar.
  - Set alarms and reminders on your phone and computer to help you follow your schedule and keep track of assignment deadlines.
  - Don’t forget to schedule breaks throughout the day, including breaks for physical activity.
  - Some students find it beneficial to work for 20-30 minutes, take a brief (about 5 minutes) break, and then work for another 20-30 minutes, rather than attempting to work in hour-long increments.
- **Blocking out distractions**
  - Wear headphones to block out noise at home.
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- Explain to people you are living with that you need quiet when you are taking an online test, quiz or exam. If you have a room where you can shut the door, put a sign on the door alerting others that you are taking a test (e.g. Quiet please, taking a test).
- Keep your phone in another room (or if it’s your only option for a timer, put it in the far corner of the room or put it in a drawer).
- Consider using a website or app blockers to limit certain distractions during set times of day
  - Freedom for Mac or Windows
  - Stay Focused
  - Limit
  - Pause
  - Cold Turkey
  - Focus Me

- **Avoid multi-tasking**
  - When your attention is divided, you are less able to commit information to long term memory, and you are more likely to make mistakes.
  - Focus on one assignment at a time.

**Managing your expectations**

- Try to be flexible and patient with yourself, your professors and your classmates, knowing that there will be “bumps in the road” as the university community manages this transition together.
- The Counseling Center is offering remote services for students and also has a page dedicated to relaxation resources.

**Know and use available academic resources**

- Your instructor is still there to help you in a virtual classroom. If you learn well by studying with others, consider organizing a virtual study group.
- The Study is offering tutoring online.
- The Writing Center is offering writing assistance online.
- Loyola Notre Dame Library is providing online support.
- Disability Support Services is available to work with students registered with DSS to ensure they have access to their courses and understand how their accommodations will work in the online environment.
  - DSS@loyola.edu
  - Marcia Wiedefeld or 410-617-2062
  - Kathleen Bruns or 410-617-2750
  - Abigail Hurson or 410-617-7380