Adjusting Study Habits During COVID-19

Change Can Be Difficult

We know that change can be difficult. Change can mean facing a lot of unknowns and disruptions. We’re changing too. As Red River College shifts to an online course environment, that means changing study habits and changing the way we access resources. Our advice is to be patient and to take care of your wellbeing first, then try out the tips below to get you started.

We Are Here For You

When you’re ready to study, the Library and Academic Success Centre are available to help students online. Connect with us at library.rrc.ca and click on the “Ask Us” button at the bottom of the page. Or email the Library at library@rrc.ca.

Staff are available to respond immediately during the following times:

- **Mon-Thu**: 7:30am - 9:00pm
- **Fri**: 7:30am - 4:30pm
- **Sat**: 8:30am - 4:00pm

Stay Organized

Avoid reliving the first week of class confusion by asking yourself the following questions:

- What parts of my course were in-person?
- How and when do I access my course?
- Is my course being recorded for later viewing?
- Are assignments and due dates changing?
- Are assignments being submitted differently?
- Are any quizzes or exams being offered virtually?
- What should I do if I need help?
- Is my course offering virtual office hours? When and on what platform?
- Is there an online forum for asking questions?

One example of a way to keep track:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Important Dates</th>
<th>Class 1</th>
<th>Class 2</th>
<th>Class 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Big Changes</td>
<td>No lab</td>
<td>Recorded lecture</td>
<td>Paper due Friday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important Links</td>
<td>Office hours link</td>
<td>Lecture link</td>
<td>Group paper folder</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Avoid Multitasking

You’ll remember less

You’re more likely to make mistakes

Assignments take longer

Instead of multitasking

- Focus on one thing at a time
- Take breaks between tasks
- Consider the pomodoro method

The pomodoro method:
Focus for 25- or 50-minute periods and then reward yourself with 5- or 10-minute breaks.

Make the Most of Video Lectures

- Stick to your instructor’s schedule as much as you can. This will provide a sense of normalcy and prevent you from falling way behind.
- Find out how to ask questions. Is there a chat feature or discussion forum?
- Close distracting tabs and apps.
- Continue to take notes as 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.

Adapted from: [https://lsa.umich.edu/content/dam/rll-assets/rll-docs/Study%20Habits.pdf](https://lsa.umich.edu/content/dam/rll-assets/rll-docs/Study%20Habits.pdf) by the “Centre for Academic Innovation”, University of Michigan. Licensed under CC 4.0.
Set a Schedule

Staying on a schedule will help you have a feeling of normalcy and prevent you from falling way behind. It can also 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.

Example of schedule template:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scheduled Activity</th>
<th>Course Tasks</th>
<th>Personal/Self Care</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8am</td>
<td></td>
<td>Shower, breakfast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9am</td>
<td>Remote lecture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10m</td>
<td>Read Ch. 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11am</td>
<td>Video Call</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12pm</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1pm</td>
<td>Read Ch. 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2pm</td>
<td>Recap lecture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Develop New Strategies

Just like your instructors, your routines may have to adjust during this time. Here are some suggestions for how to swap your old habits for new ones.

- If you study in a Library or coffee shop → Studying in a chair
- Enjoy background noise → White noise app or playlist
- Study in groups → Virtual or phone-based study sessions
- Thrive on tight timelines → Work with others to set up a schedule
- Use in-person tutoring → Visit ASC online
- Speak with Librarians in the Library → Chat with Library staff online

Do remote team and group work

Remote collaboration looks different, but is definitely possible.

- Try not to procrastinate. Resist the urge to put it off. Make small progress and stay in touch.
- Meet regularly. Use regular group chat video conversations any week you’re working together.
- Set a purpose for meetings and use a shared notes doc. Set the purpose of your meeting in advance. Use a shared doc so you can all contribute and follow along.
- Keep videos open when you can. You’ll be able to see expressions of your teammates and stay connected to each other.
- Check on each other and ask for backup. Speak to a team member directly if they are consistently absent. Let your instructor know if you don’t receive a response.

Stay Connected to Others

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.
- Use Webex or Microsoft Teams to connect with classmates, and tutors to talk through a tough problem
- Attend virtual office hours, study groups, and workshops 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.
Additional Resources

• RRC updates on COVID-19
• Preventing COVID-19
• ASC Online Academic Supports
• Library Online Services and Collection
• RRC Internet and Technology Solutions Help Resources
• RRC Counselling Services
• RRC Wellness and Mental Health Services

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