

**THE NEW
GUIDE
TO STUDYING
@ HOME**



Studying at home is not a new concept, but many of us are not used to being at home for long stretches of time. So, on top of making the grades and learning in new ways, you now have to overcome the temptations and competing distractions. Mark Twain said it best, “Never let your schooling get in the way of your education.” With this new learning format, you have control to create a healthy environment, positive mindset and platform for success. And, remember, it is just as new to you as it is your teachers.



- 1. Create your schedule.** Set your time for class, for study, for fun, for personal growth, for friends and for relaxation.
- 2. Focus is mandatory.** Find new ways to increase focus on how to be the best learner—in other words, your unique learning style finally takes priority.
- 3. Embrace learning.** Use this time to learn for class and learn for you.
- 4. Earn the grade you deserve.** Increase the effort to make your grade and learn the material.
- 5. Boredom is acceptable.** Used to so much stimulation and overfilled schedules, accept that some measure of boredom or stillness is actually healthy and additive to your learning.



THE NEW NECESSITIES

1. Express vulnerability. We are all feeling something. Some of us feel the despair and anxiety about being away from friends and having a new learning style forced upon us. The feelings are real. And, so is the anxiety over change and worrying about what is next—next day, next week, next semester. Show and share your vulnerability. More than social media, it is important to connect with classmates, friends and family in a more authentic and genuine way—share what you are feeling with the spoken word through a phone call or face time, instead of a simple post. You may even try to ignore social media for a day—other people are not having more fun than you. Reach out to people you trust—share where you are with school and with life.

TRY THIS:
REACH OUT TO A
TEACHER THROUGH
EMAIL ON A TOPIC
YOU ARE STRUGGLING
WITH.

2. Shun labels. We are constantly being introduced to new concepts and labels (often negative), like social distancing, that in concept are helpful, but in spirit are destructive. Let's remake social distancing and think about it as physical distancing as we create more social and human connections. Why think about gatherings of less than 10 as a burden? Let's embrace the rule of family and our closest friends—it only takes two to make a party. No, it is not the after-Thursday soccer practice get together over pizza, but it can still be fun—albeit different. Don't think about it as only studying at home—think about it as learning anywhere. It's natural to assign labels to things that are new or challenging to understand. As your classroom moves home, there may be a convergence of roles—student, child, partner, friend, even parent for the adult student. You may wear many of these roles, especially in higher education. Don't limit yourself by one label—in times like these there is only one label you need to succeed and survive—leader. Be the leader of you and your life.

TRY THIS:
IDENTIFY FIVE LABELS THAT YOU OR OTHERS ASSIGN TO YOU. HOW MANY ARE ACTUALLY LIMITING YOU? WHAT WOULD CHANGE IF YOU CHANGED ANY ONE OF THESE LABELS TO LEADER?

3. Reconnect connections. Fear creates barriers that limit our connections with people and important things. We must not limit human connections, even if we cannot experience them in person. Part of learning is being in a shared space with people who have different thoughts, perspectives and learning styles. We miss something learning in the isolation of our homes. More than just experiencing class online, we must now search out ways to connect with classmates, peers, study groups and teachers. We can use video to make this happen, but we also must envision and activate other ways—including hosting walking meetings, virtual lunch dates and celebrations, as well as study sessions. Also, find ways in your everyday communications to create connections—two favorites are eliminating the question “why?” from the conversation as it creates unnecessary barriers. Instead, ask “help me understand” or “can you explain what...” Also, try adding 15 seconds to every conversation you have. When speaking to someone, that 15 seconds equals 30 extra words, which add meaning, color and description. Anything we can do to create connections helps our learning and overall wellbeing.

TRY THIS:

SET UP A VIRTUAL STUDY GROUP AND CREATE A WALKING SESSION (EVEN IF IN YOUR APARTMENT OR HOME).

4. Practice recess. When we were in elementary school, we thought about recess as simply fun. We know better today—this time is essential to let the mind and body have a release and a physical break. Schedule in recess for yourself, just like you would a study break. Give your mind a break and reenergize your body. Do something physical—even if it is running in place, creating an in-home scavenger hunt or some other form of physical activity. Search the internet for new exercises or dance classes. Teach yourself a new physical activity and have fun in the process.

TRY THIS:

TAKE THREE UNBREAKABLE ITEMS FROM YOUR HOME AND LEARN TO JUGGLE (THINK LEMONS OR ORANGES). THEN ADD A WALK WITH IT.

5. Add an art or cooking class to your schedule.

Be active in injecting creativity into your day and schedule. Boredom can sneak into your routine, regardless of how hard you are studying. In addition to the physical break, create defined times for creative exploration. Put it on your schedule (even if it is not on your official school schedule.) Find things in your home to create with. Use tactile things like paper and crayons/pens, playdough, pipe cleaners or any fun supplies you have at home. Take out home supplies or pots and pans and create something, even if only temporary, that exercises the right side of your brain. And, that creativity can come in the form of exploring new music or rewriting your own lyrics.

TRY THIS:

DRAW A PICTURE OF WHAT HOPE AND HAPPINESS LOOK LIKE TO YOU (IT MAY BE AS SIMPLE AS DRAWING A BLUE SKY OR THE SUN OR AS COMPLICATED AS YOU WANT).



TRY THIS:

FIND THREE DIFFERENT SPACES IN YOUR HOME THAT YOU WILL MAKE YOUR STUDY SPACES AND NAME THEM FOR THE DIFFERENT SUBJECT MATTER YOU WILL STUDY IN EACH.

6. Design your study space.

Inject intentionality in your new home learning environment, whether your home study space is a kitchen table, bar top or bedroom. Be purposeful in how you design or rethink your studying environment at home, taking into consideration space, distractions, family, etc. Is it intentionally naming a space “my classroom or my study space,” adding color to space, adding pictures (family, friends, classmates), adding inspirational quotes each day or finding a new “desk” every day in your home? Can you stand and study for part of the day? Set a schedule of when you work where in your home and share that with your family or roommates, so they know and respect your school space for that given point in time.



7. Don't grade yourself. In times of change and transition, we often place extra attention on judging ourselves and being more self-critical. We look for what is different, for what has changed, and for what is wrong. It is natural as we are spending more time away from our social

environment and classmates to spend more time looking inward. This is important to self-assess and reflect on where we are in a given moment, but we must do so without judgement. Take time to think about things you want to do and learn going forward without looking backward and assigning a grade—regardless of how high or low it may

be. Be in the moment and begin to plan ahead with optimism.

TRY THIS:
TAKE 10 MINUTES TO IDENTIFY THREE THINGS YOU WANT TO AIM FOR IN THE FUTURE, ACCEPTING THAT YOU MAY OR MAY NOT ACHIEVE THEM, BUT KNOWING THAT THE JOURNEY IS VALUABLE.

8. "Participation/citizenship grade" counts. This may be the most important grade you get. And, it may not show up on your official transcript. Your values are on display when you study and work from home—they will set you up or break you down. This is the time to shun the shortcut, and embrace doing what is right. It's not about cheating the system and going online for the answers, it is about cheating your future. Take time to think about your values and what matters to you as you learn to grow and move your life forward. Perhaps more than any other grade, this one will stay with you wherever you go.

TRY THIS:
IDENTIFY THE 3-5 CORE VALUES THAT ARE DEFINING TO YOU AND YOUR CHARACTER.



9. Follow the rabbit hole. This is your moment to embrace curiosity—specifically intellectual curiosity. Push your learning to new levels—without the encouragement of your teachers. Find your passion in this moment. What project can you begin that will enhance your classroom learning? What additional lessons can you find online? What discussions can you start on a given topic? What can you research that can add to or change understanding on the subject? Find the free online classes from Ivy League schools. Or, visit as many museums as you can online. This is your time to start that passion project, to read the book that has nothing to do with your studies, or to explore your uncovered talent.

TRY THIS:

EXPLORE ONE NEW PASSION THAT EVEN IF YOU DON'T MASTER IT, YOU WILL AT LEAST BEGIN TO LEARN ABOUT (LIKE PLAYING AN INSTRUMENT OR READING A BOOK ON A NEW AREA OF INTEREST).

Make your own fun . You are at home, wearing what you want, in your own space—embrace it. Being off campus can be incredibly challenging, but what are some things you would have done if you were back at school, and how can you make that virtual? No idea is too silly! In other words, regardless of how hard life is, we are actively seeking out fun and finding a way to live out happiness in this chaotic time. You can make your own fun—it may be with others or yourself. But, find something that you have fun with and embrace it!



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