

Adjusting to Remote Learning

We'll get through this together.

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 help you feel even 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 strategies for new ones
- Working with a group or team
- Being kind when online
- Staying connected to other people

Your study habits may need to change.

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

1. Staying organized

With classes operating remotely, staying organized will look differently for online versus face to face classes.

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

How are parts of the class being offered/delivered?

- What are the in-person (synchronous) parts of this course?
- Do you have to be online and in your class at a specific time or can you watch a recording at a later time?
- Where can you find and enter your class and see your online material? (Zoom, recorded lectures, D2L, etc.)
- Check your PCC email regularly. This is likely the first place your instructor and others at PCC will communicate important information.



How is coursework being assigned and how are you supposed to submit it?

- What kind of assignments is the instructor expecting you to complete?
- Do you have the tools (computer program, webcam, etc.) to complete your assignments? Do you know where to go if you don't have the tools?
- Where do you find due dates for assignments, quizzes, etc.?

Chances are your instructor has created a plan for how classes will be taught online. Do not hesitate to reach out to them if you have questions about the process, and review your course syllabus regularly.

What should you do if you need help?

- Is your instructor offering virtual office hours? When and how?
- Is there another place for asking questions?
- Are you able to connect with a classmate and support one another?
- Are you comfortable reaching out to a staff member that has helped you in the past?



2. Avoiding multitasking

The downsides of multitasking:

- Assignments take longer. Each time you come back to an assignment (from Instagram for example), you have to get familiar with it again, 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 out the brain.
- You'll remember less. When your brain is divided, you're less able to commit what you're learning 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 these tips:

- Focus on one thing at a time.
- Take breaks between tasks.
- Consider focusing on a task for 25- or 50-minutes at a time, then reward yourself with 5- or 10-minute breaks (this is also called the "[pomodoro method](#)").

3. Making the most of video lectures

- Stick to your instructor's schedule as much as you can. Staying on a schedule will help prevent you from falling behind.
- Find out how to ask questions. Is there a chat feature? Is there a discussion forum?
- Close distracting tabs and apps. Humans are not as good at multitasking as they think! (See #2 above.)
- Continue to take notes as if you were there in person.

4. Setting a schedule

As the situation unfolds, you may have fewer social commitments, group meetings, or work hours. Instead you may find that you have other priorities such as taking care of your family, or children, or a loved one. 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 link below (you will want to download the template and save to your computer or Google Drive) to organize your time. Include time for exercise and self-care.

[Schedule Template](#)

| | Scheduled Activity | Course Tasks | Personal Care |
|-------|------------------------------|----------------|---------------------------------|
| 8am | | | shower, breakfast |
| 9am | call in for remote lecture | | |
| 10 am | | read chapter 3 | |
| 11 am | | | break- video call with a friend |
| 12 pm | | | lunch |
| 1 pm | | | |
| 2 pm | | read chapter 4 | |
| 3 pm | recap lecture with classmate | | |



5. Trading your 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 recreate that at home. Maybe it's studying in a chair, rather than on your bed or couch, 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 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 recreate that for you.

6. Working with a group or a team

Remote collaboration will look a little different but it is definitely possible

- **Try not to procrastinate.** That group project may be out-of-sight and 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 with your group.
- **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 conversations over video any week you're working together. Check out [tools you have access to](#) as a PCC student.
- **Set goals 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 goals of your meeting in advance. Take notes in a shared document so you can all contribute and follow along.
- **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. Decide with your group how you all will do the work, if that is everyone works in a same shared document and/or determine another way.
- **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 it isn't being petty, it's your team's responsibility.

7. Be kind when online

- Follow the same rules online as you would in person. Be polite and ethical.
- Be aware of your “surroundings” and consider your audience.
- Consider what items are in your background that your webcam might be showing to others. Or turn your camera off.
- Use how you are in-person during face to face classes, and bring that to your online classes.
- If you’re in a live session, consider muting your microphone if you are not talking in case there is sound around you that could come through and distract others.
- Try using full sentences when communicating online. Avoid using abbreviations or “text” speak.
- Be mindful of your writing. For example, don’t WRITE IN ALL CAPITAL LETTERS. It comes across as shouting. Use written annotations in your text to express mood.
- You can use different emoticon like smiley faces :-) or surround words in asterisks, such as *smile* before posting a comment. Read through your message to see how it will sound to the reader.
- Don’t assume negative intent. Give others the benefit of the doubt and ask questions to clarify their meaning before you respond and assume their comment is offensive.

Ex. Can you help me understand?

Ex. I am not sure I am following?

8. Staying connected to other people.

Even if we limit how much face-to-face time we spend with others, connecting with family and friends might be more important than ever. Also, 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 [Google Apps](#) to connect with classmates to talk through a tough problem.
- Attend virtual office hours or study groups that your instructor might provide so that you can stay up on your coursework.

Please remember, we are here to help.

If COVID-19 has disrupted your life and this all feels like it came at the worst possible time, remember: you've have faculty and staff at PCC who are here to support you. The college has been adjusting and finding ways to meet some of the needs of our students. Please check the college's website for updates, information, and resources. If you have a question and/or need some support please reach out and let someone know.

Remember, take a deep breath, reach out if you have questions or need help, do your best, get some rest, and [wash your hands](#).

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [PCC COVID-19 Updates and Resources](#)
- [Counseling Services](#)
- [Services for Students with Disabilities](#)
- [Start Guide for Online Learning](#)
- [Student Help Desk](#)
- [Remote Learning Terminology Guide](#)



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