

Developing a Routine and Staying on Track

I [crowd sourced this question online](#). Below is my advice as well as the advice of a few other professors and students. These are in no particular order.

Set a schedule and try to develop a routine. I'll be binge watching more Netflix, too, but try to designate working hours and days to focus on each class. Try to develop a routine for exercise, sleep, meals, online socializing. It's not good to let the days of the week and the hours of the day all merge together in a blur.

Give yourself rewards. If you watch all the lectures and do all the readings for this week, what fun thing are you going to do? Maybe rent a movie online, buy new nail polish or a face mask, or order your favorite delivery. I have no idea what motivates you in particular but, as we discussed earlier in the semester, people are driven by positive incentives.

Set a goal to participate in online class chatter even more than you might do in class. If you disengage from the discussion, you will feel less motivated to keep up with class. Ask questions or share news stories. Everyone will be a little bored and looking for ways to engage.

Schedule breaks in your routine. This could be breaks to go for a run or do a plank challenge, it could be to watch tiktok videos, it could be to video chat your friends. Don't try to do all the class work at once. You will get bored and you won't retain as much. Sometimes even just going to stand outside for five minutes makes a big difference.

Schedule study hall with your friends. Zoom/Skype to chat, then everyone mute and study/listen to lectures for 30 minutes, then unmute and chat more, repeat. This serves a dual purpose of staying connected with friends and peer pressure to focus on studying and school work.

Schedule chats or happy hour with your friends. I have been doing this a few times a week. This doesn't need to be about school stuff but you could brainstorm with your people about what is working for them. But more importantly, it keeps you connected and spirits up a bit.

Set reminders for important dates and assignments. Some people find having this in physical writing is most useful. I have a huge whiteboard in my office on campus and a smaller whiteboard in my office at home. Other people find it more useful to keep it all online. Use iCal or Google Calendar or whatever. Spend some time putting everything in there and set reminders.

Join my open Zoom meetings every once in a while. They are scheduled for half an hour ish twice a week (longer if the internet is working and people want). See above for details.

If possible, reserve a physical space for study - a desk, a table, whatever. That space can help differentiate study/class time from other parts of the day. Likewise, use virtual desktops/workspaces to keep computer entertainment/ social media separate from work/study.

Break every assignment down into small parts. Make a goal to cross off a certain number of small goals a day.

Find other ways to connect with the content. 1) Read an on-topic, off syllabus book. 2) Find and follow a professional on social media with expertise in the subject. 3) Connect with a local alumna/us.

Compiled by Rebecca Kreitzer, UNC Chapel Hill. Feel free to save this word doc, edit it, and share with your students!