

## Don't Let the Coronavirus Infect Your GPA!

### 10 Tips for Surviving Distance Learning this Spring.

Devouring soft serve in Founders Hall. Crowding the grill at the Student Union dining hall. Rushing the classroom door with the other guy who also arrived "just in time" for lecture. High fiving in the O'Dell weight room. Catching up at Café '60. Winning a foosball game on the third floor of Scholars Hall. Cheering Team Spirit in Faith Arena. Perfecting critical moves on the field or court with your teammates...

After you've been attending classes remotely or online from the same four walls for a few days, you may find yourself with cabin fever. It's hard to lose the structure of life lived on campus. Even those mundane moments that made your weekdays feel complete are missing. For many of us, these changes are hard. Really hard.

**College is a full-time job! Experts suggest two hours of study weekly for every (one) hour of class time.**

Yet without that sense of common purpose and communal energy that comes from campus life, it's too easy to couch surf and stare at pigeons while scarfing down a Costco-sized bag of caramel popcorn.

Don't do it! We urge you: Step away from the snacks.

Even in this seriously strange semester, school still matters. The social distancing will eventually end, but your GPA recalculates relentlessly...Every. Single. Term. To keep going strong, you'll need new at-home study routines.

Here are 10 tips to help you keep your GPA healthy while we all await our on-campus reunion.

#### **BONUS Tip #11: Celebrate each day's accomplishments.**

Relax. Indulge in a hobby for an hour. Watch that fave show with your family. Facetime a friend (after THEY have completed THEIR daily study, of course!). Order pizza delivery. You've earned the leisure (and the pizza) because you've finished the day's work. High five!!!

**Your GPA will thank you.**



## Tip #1

### Use a Planner.

**Plot ALL class deadlines in a planner of your choice.** When do you need to call into class? Watch that recording? Write a thread response? What about that paper, project, quiz or test? Put EVERY due date into a planning system you will use. Sticky notes on your mirror? Super! [Smartphone calendar\\*](#)? Snazzy! Home office whiteboard? Why not? [Hardcopy journal\\*](#)? How lovely. Notes on your inner arm in ink? Um, OK (You may want to rethink this if you like to shower, but we don't judge). Whatever your style, find what works, and USE IT.

*\*For illustration purposes only. OUAZ does not endorse or recommend any good or service mentioned in this newsletter unless specifically stated.*



## Tip #2

*Set daily goals.*

**Book specific times in your planner each day to study.** This time is outside of any fixed class or work schedule. It doesn't have to be the same time each day, but consistency may help you succeed. Block enough time in your calendar each day to give yourself the total time you need to meet your due dates. Focus on the current week of course, but don't lose track of multi-week assignments. On some days, plan work that will help you make progress on the larger projects too.

✓ **Make daily checklists based on your deadlines.** It's the old joke. Question: "How do you eat a woolly mammoth?" Answer: "One bite at a time." Today: will you read and answer the chapter review questions? Do the research for that essay? Draft the essay? Finish 5 problems? Take a quiz? Watch the video? Start that speech? Review content for the next exam?

List clear, specific tasks. You CAN do it all – just not in one day. Practice spacing things out. That way, your workload can look and feel much more manageable.

## Tip #3

*Schedule time for study.*

**Design your study environment.** Do you need a closed door with no noise? What size desk do you need? Do you have enough light? Is it comfortable temperature-wise? Does the chair enable good posture? Would a sound effects app such as [Noisli](#)\* create that coffee shop buzz or beachside wave sound you crave? Does all of your computer equipment work? Are your supplies within easy reach? Plan these details up front so that you don't lose time each day re-organizing your study space.

## Tip #4

*Claim your space.*

**OUAZ**



**Other people can be your #1 distraction.**

Don't assume you'll handle family requests, social media alerts, etc., "as they come up." They will only eat up your time. Put aside your phone unless you need it to communicate about your homework. Close your Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat and other social apps that will steal your productivity.

*Communicate your study hours to others* with kindness and respect. Remind your family that you need to focus. While your family and friends are of course important to you, you are working towards an important goal. They can support you by respecting your schedule.

source: Studyinternational.com

**Tip #5**

*Plan for distractions.*

**Tip #6**

*Check Blackboard regularly.*

**Posting information to Blackboard is the primary way many of your professors will communicate with you** about your courses and assignments. Since conditions and information can change at any time, staying on top of Blackboard announcements and your Ottawa student email will help you adjust your due dates and daily study plans as needed to avoid falling behind.

**Take care of your body so it can take care of you.**

Get sleep – lots of it. Eat healthy meals. Stay hydrated. At lunchtime, or during that late-afternoon sluggishness, get up and take a 15-minute walk. In place of that morning team practice, perhaps you can run, cycle or walk before diving into your daily study schedule. Or, perhaps it's better for you to burn off steam at the end of each day. Again, find what works for you. Don't think of college as a sprint, but as a marathon. You need **sustainable** healthy habits.

**Tip #7**

*Manage your physical health.*

**OUAZ**



## Tip #8

*Care for your mental and emotional health.*

**Find ways to manage your thoughts and emotions, so they don't manage you.** If you've set aside 4 hours to accomplish that day's goals, take a 5-minute break each hour – and keep to the five minutes (setting a timer if needed!). If you feel yourself getting anxious, get up and walk away from your workspace. Try some breathing exercises, a *short* walk, pet the dog, or say hello to little brother to calm yourself down. Maybe answer a *few texts* (set a limit!). Often, a simple, quick change of scenery or conversation can restore your sense of direction.

Then, get back to work!

### Walk away from the workbench.

Shut down the computer. Close the textbook. Put your pens back in their desktop organizer. Zip up the backpack.

You've done it!

## Tip #9

*When you're done, STOP!*



## Tip #10

*Review and adjust.*

**Review the day's progress and adjust your plan for the next day (if needed).** Did you accomplish what you needed to accomplish in the time you set aside that day? If not, adjust your plans for the next day. More time or less? Was your list too ambitious or not long enough? Do you need to choose a different time of day, or a different place to study? Do you need to remind your family about your need to focus? Should your phone live in your nightstand while you study in the kitchen? Figure it out and make a plan that helps you achieve your goals.

Don't beat yourself up if each day is not a perfect success. This is hard stuff!! Simply resolve to do better tomorrow.