

We'll get through this together as Boxers

You may be feeling overwhelmed right now due to all the uncertainties and disappointments related to the impact of the Coronavirus. Be patient with yourself, your fellow students, and your instructors while we navigate this **together**. First and foremost, **take care of yourself**. Taking a moment to create a plan for your continued success as a student may help you gain a sense of control and optimism. *We can do this.*

Your **study habits may need to change**. This guide was created to give you some things to keep in mind as you re-enter your academic life in these new circumstances.

What's included here:

- 1 Staying organized
- 2 Avoiding multitasking
- 3 Getting the most out of video lectures
- 4 Setting a schedule
- 5 Rethinking your strategies
- 6 Working in groups and teams
- 7 Staying connected to others

1 Staying organized

Coming back to fully on-line courses is going to be like your first day of classes as a freshman but this time you're half-way through the semester and your professors are in the same boat.

#thanksCorona

Things to track for each course:

How are the parts of the course that were done **in-person** changing?

- What new format are these things taking?
- Are they streaming live? Recorded for you to view anytime?
- Where are lectures accessed and do you have the technology necessary to do so?
- Is there a schedule for when you need to watch them or participate in learning activities?

How are **assignments** changing?

- Are there new due dates?
- Is the submission process changing?
- How are quizzes and exams going to be handled?
- Do you have access to specific equipment or resources needed to support your coursework?

How are you going to **get help**?

- Does your professor have virtual office hours? When and on what platform (e.g., Zoom, Hangouts)?
- Is there an on-line forum for asking questions?
- Are tutors still available? How and when?
- Is there an e-mail list/group chat for the class?

You could keep all of this information in a spreadsheet like this:

	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3
Important dates		Paper due 4/24!	Project due 5/2
Big changes	No lab. Live stream lecture.	Recorded lectures in Drive	No final exam
Important links	Lecture link. Office hours link	Lecture link	Project submission link

2 Avoiding multitasking

We understand that multitasking is probably a standard mode of how you work independently, but when it comes to learning new material, being focused is considered essential to the long-term encoding of information in your brain. When you are learning online, it may be tempting to multitask, but research shows that only 2-5% of people can actually learn like this.

The disadvantages of multitasking:

- **Assignments take longer.** Every time you come back to work on an assignment, you lose time in switching mental gears and getting back into the flow of where you were and what you were going to do next. You will be more productive in staying engaged with coursework for longer periods of time.
- **You are more likely to make mistakes.** Switching your brain between multiple subjects and activities leads to greater mental fatigue, which often leads to less polished work.
- **You will remember less.** [An unfocused brain does not encode information properly.](#)

A better way

- When you need to learn something, consider the [Magic of Monotasking](#).
- Focus on one thing at a time.
- Take breaks between tasks.
- Consider the “[pomodoro technique](#)” to help you focus for 25- or 50-minute periods and then reward yourself with short breaks.

3 Getting the most out of video lectures

Let's face it, watching a lecture on a screen is a much different experience than being in a classroom — especially a small classroom like the ones we value so highly at Pacific. Your faculty know this and are doing the best they can to deliver instruction in a way that works best for all involved. They had to do this on very short notice, so there may be some bumps in the road. If there are any

questions or concerns about your classes, be sure to contact your professor. *They want to help you!*

- **Stick to your instructor's schedule as much as you can.** Staying on a schedule will help you have a sense of normalcy and prevent you from falling behind.
- **Find out how to ask questions about lecture material.** Will chat be available in streaming lectures? Is there a discussion forum for talking about recorded material?
- **Remove all distractions while watching lectures.** There will be more distractions when you are viewing lectures online. Do your best to limit these. (See section 2 on multitasking.)
- **Take notes as if you were there in person.** If the lecture is recorded, note the time in the video that corresponds to your notes on the subject matter.
- **Watch recordings at normal speed.** Research shows that you retain less material when you watch it at 1.5x speed or faster.

4 Setting a schedule

With the absence of work and social commitments, you've got a lot of time on your hands. When all your courses are online, you will have more responsibility for staying on top of your coursework. Setting a realistic and repeatable schedule for yourself can provide structure and keep you motivated. Use a calendar application or planner to organize your time for the rest of the semester.

Your schedule should include:

- A daily wake up time — *keep using that alarm*
- Time to eat breakfast and prepare for the day
- Time to engage in all your courses
- Time to study and work on assignments
- Breaks to eat and check in with family and friends
- Time to connect online with classmates
- Time for exercise, mindfulness and self-care

Oregon State University has some nice resources to help you [Build Your Time Management Toolbox](#).

5 Rethinking your strategies

Your normal routines may have to adjust during this time. Look for ways to adapt your habits or form new ones that will help you continue to learn and do your best work.

For example:

- If you have a preferred location to study at (like Starbucks or the library), ask yourself, what kind of environment helps you study better? Is it possible to re-create this at home? Creating a space where you always study can help put you in that mode. Avoid switching into study mode without changing your location. While your bed or the couch might be cozy, you might find it more difficult to keep an academic frame of mind, which comes so easily at school.
- If you always study in groups, see if your classmates are willing to join you in a video chat space like Google Hangouts or FaceTime. Remember that not everyone is in your timezone and there are some diminishing returns as you add more people to the virtual space.
- If you thrive under tight deadlines, understand that your time is going to feel more unstructured and less urgent. Give yourself, and any groups you are working with, smaller deadlines along the way.

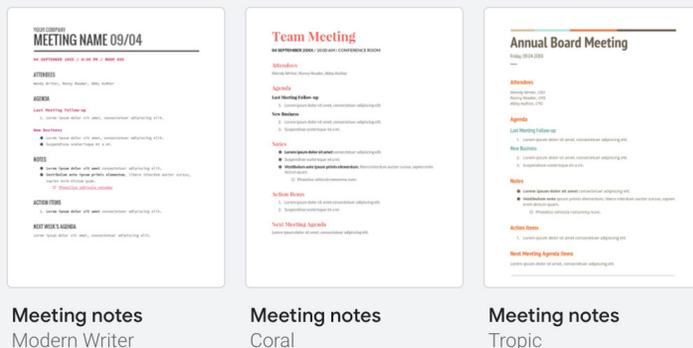
6 Working in groups and teams

Collaborating remotely will feel different, but it is definitely possible.

- **Don't procrastinate.** That group project may be “out-of-sight, out-of-mind” if you aren't seeing each other regularly. Resist the urge to put your group work off. Make bits of progress in stages and stay in touch with one another.
- **Meet on a regular basis,** especially if you were working together in a class or lab. Consider a quick text message to your group chat every couple of days to check in on each other's progress. Try to have a video chat as a group at least once a week while projects are being planned and completed.

- **Have an agenda for group meetings and use a shared space for notes.** Google Docs are a great way to set the priorities for your meeting, delegate responsibilities and make note of things that need follow-up before the next meeting. When creating a new Google Doc, choose “from a template” and look for “Meeting Notes” under the general tab.

Work



Templates in Google Docs that facilitate team meetings

- **Keep your team in sight.** Arrange your screen so that you can see each other as much as possible. This will keep everyone focused on the work at hand and connect you as a team.
- **Check on each other and ask for backup.** If someone has been absent from your group meetings or chats, confirm with them that they are still able to participate in the project. If someone on the team is not communicating, let your professor know so they can check in with the student and make sure everything is okay.

7 Staying connected to others

Connecting to your family and friends is more important than ever to your sense of well-being. Staying in touch with your instructors, classmates, and group mates is still an important part of your success as a student. Make these things a priority in your regular schedule.

Consider trying some of these:

- **Schedule a video call with friends and family.** Talking and laughing with people that love and support you can help with stress and anxiety.

- Host a regular virtual get together in a chat platform. Put school aside long enough to enjoy each others company and share your experiences.
- Miss seeing your professors, supervisors, or coaches? Invite them to a chat. They too may be feeling a bit isolated.

Stay hopeful and remember that this will pass

COVID-19 is a bummer. It has canceled our events, halted our research and creative endeavors, and cut short our time together on our beautiful campus. While isolated, **none of us is alone**. We have the strong Boxer Community that binds us and supports us even when we're apart. **This is temporary**, and when it ends, we will all find our way back to normal. Until then, remember to breathe, do your best, stay healthy, and **wash your hands**.

Resources

- [Pacific University Coronavirus Updates](#)
- [CDC Information on preventing COVID](#)
- [The Center for Educational Technology and Curricular Innovation's Video Conferencing Guide](#)
- [Pacific's Center for Learning and Student Success](#)
- [Pacific's Social Media Channels](#)
- [Tips for Taking Online Classes](#)
- [The Student Counseling Center](#)
- [Student Veterans Service Office](#)
- [Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion](#)
- [Academic Support Services at Pacific](#)

