

# STAYING PRODUCTIVE WHILE WORKING REMOTELY

Here are some practical tips to help you optimize your time as you work at home during physical distancing. Everyone's needs are a little different, so try out these strategies and see what works for you!

## Find a routine or make a plan

- Keeping a consistent schedule allows you to have start and end times to your work day, regular sleep habits and routines to look forward to.
- Use time and project management techniques. Prioritizing your tasks in order of their importance reduces the impact of the unexpected. Make the most of your available time.
- For major projects, tests and exams, work backwards from your deadlines or due dates. Resources like the [UTSC Assignment Calculator](#) can generate a series of sub-deadlines for you to stay on track.

## Switch tasks, but don't multitask

- It isn't always possible to stay focused for long periods of time. Dividing up a day into multiple sessions can match the small goals you set for yourself, and having more than one project to do in a day allows you to stay productive.
- Techniques like the Pomodoro can help you manage work with a limited attention span. Set a timer for 25 minutes of uninterrupted work and a five-minute break. After a few of these "Pomodoros," take a longer break before starting the method again. Experiment with the length of time to find what works best for you.
- Find a way to manage distractions. If you're distracted by something that needs to be done, make a note to tackle it when your current task is complete. You can also write out the distracting thoughts that you can't control.
- Try to pre-empt interruptions by letting people know when you'll be working, silencing your notifications or putting your phone away.
- Having multiple tabs open on your browser divides your attention. Whether you need to use the page for something later or want to check it out during a break, copy the URL and make a note of what it is so you can re-open the page at a later time.
- "Restart" a day in the early afternoon to evaluate your productivity and to make a new plan for the rest of the day. After a short break, you can settle in for a second work session.

### Use all of the resources available to you

- Academic Success has moved lots of its programming and resources online. Two-hour [Study Hub](#) sessions can help you set and meet your goals, and they're offered throughout the week. Graduate students can also join a [Graduate Writing Group](#), to focus on writing goals with the support of a student facilitator.
- [Student Life](#) services are still working too, for things like supporting mental and physical health, navigating disability-related barriers, finding experiences and opportunities, and making connections with other U of T students.
- Writing Centres are available at different [colleges](#), through professional [faculties](#) and for [graduate students](#). Book an appointment for individualized support and to set some intermediate deadlines for accomplishing tasks.
- Connect with us online in workshops, themed discussions and individual appointments. We're here to help!

### Take breaks and make time for self care

- Be compassionate with yourself. Do your best to focus on the things that are within your control and develop stress management practices that work for you.
- Monitor your levels of focus when you're working. Sometimes it's better to take a break than to drag out your work sessions. We're often less effective when we're hungry, thirsty or tired.
- Taking a break to get some exercise, connect with others, meditate or do something you enjoy can help your work. Social media scrolling and watching videos can be fun, but make sure you're getting time away from your screens.
- Do something to mark the end of a long week, like a special activity on Saturdays or Sundays to have fun and recharge.

#### ***Want to know more?***

Academic Success has resources, workshops, events and appointments to support you.

→ look us up online at [uoft.me/AcademicSuccess](https://uoft.me/AcademicSuccess)

→ register for appointments and events at [CLNx.utoronto.ca](https://CLNx.utoronto.ca)

→ or email us at [mail.asc@utoronto.ca](mailto:mail.asc@utoronto.ca)