

Sound study skills and techniques for remote learning

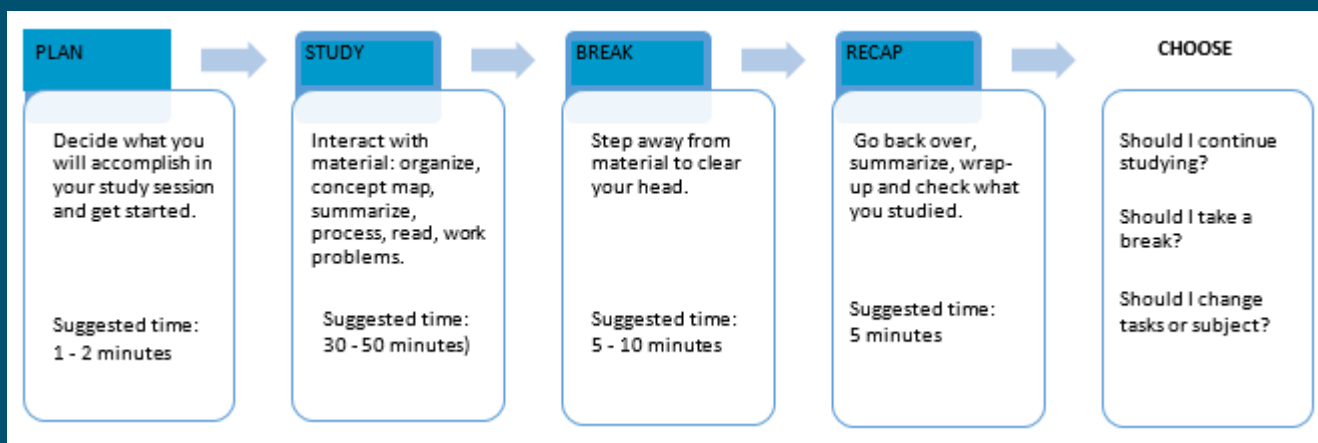
Things may feel out-of-control right now. With COVID-19 we are all facing a lot of uncertainties and disruptions. We know you have a lot on your plate adjusting to the changes of remote learning, changing your learning environment, and establishing your new routine. Try to be patient with yourself, your fellow NWU students, and your lecturers during this time. Make sure you take care of your well-being first. Making a plan and adjusting your studying may help you feel a little sense of control.

Take responsibility - Be a Self-Directed Learner!

With remote learning, there will not be regular face-to-face class attendance. You must take responsibility for your learning - to make a firm time commitment to your studies and to discipline yourself in studying. You should log onto eFundi at least once a day to check for any new announcements, changes to due dates, important information, etc. that lecturers may have uploaded

HAVE FOCUSED STUDY SESSIONS

“Focused Study Sessions (FSSs) are designed to work with the way your brain learns best: in short, focused increments. Schedule several focused study sessions for each module each week” (LSU: Division of Student Affairs, Centre for Academic Success).



UTILIZE YOUR RESOURCES

There is a wide variety of information and tools available to you as a NWU student on the website <http://services.nwu.ac.za/KeepOnTL>. Also make sure to take advantage of academic advising, tutoring, academic peer mentoring and Supplemental Instruction via one of the proposed apps, software or telephone. It is important that you make the most all the resources your lecturer made available on eFundi. Things to keep in mind (Scottsdale Community College):

- “Stick to your lecturer’s schedule as much as you can. Staying on a schedule will help you have a feeling of normalcy and prevent you from falling way behind”.
- Ask questions via the chat feature or the discussion forum.
- “Close distracting tabs and apps. Humans are not as good at multitasking as they think!
- With recorded lectures, concept videos, etc., continue to take notes as you would if you were there in person.
- Watch recordings at normal speed. Research shows that playback speed of 1.5x can lower your retention and can result in lower scores on assessments. Faster playback speeds are worse for complex, multi-step material (which most of your lectures probably are)”.

Make effective use of Study Strategies

Your routines may have to adjust during this time. Look for ways to adapt your usual habits or form new ones. For example (Community College of Philadelphia):

- “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. When that gets hard, see if you can even do fifteen minutes at a time”.

It is very important to avoid passive studying like re-reading your notes, textbook, or Powerpoint slides. Make sure you know your learning style and use it! Make a realistic assessment of your skills and knowledge and the conditions under which you are most likely to learn. Know your strengths, limitations, and “how” you prefer to learn. With these in mind, you have to study actively – For example:

- Concept mapping
- Flashcards
- Summarising notes in your own words
- Self-testing
- Practice questions
- Teach the material to someone else
- Study material over a few days, not just all at once; repetition is key – refer to the section on Time Management and create a personalised study plan.

HONOUR AND INTEGRITY

Make sure to review the NWU University’s [Policy on Academic Integrity](#) policy. If you are not sure if collaboration with classmates is allowed, ask! Avoid plagiarism by using the correct citations (APA / Harvard). If you are not sure how to cite – refer to the [Referencing Guides](#) on the NWU Library webpage.

Stay engaged and motivated

Minimise your distractions - when possible, create a dedicated separate study area with all the tools and supplies you need (see the section on Staying Organised). To ensure that you stay engaged, check your email and eFundi daily for updates from your lecturers and also check the NWU COVID-19 website <http://www.nwu.ac.za/coronavirus/> as well as <http://services.nwu.ac.za/KeepOnTL> for the latest updates on the academic calendar, COVID-19, and more. “Finally, don’t underestimate the effort needed to fully commit to online learning. To make sure that you stay motivated and engaged in your online learning experience, consider following these tips:

- Feel free to create your study routine at your own comfortable pace.
- Decorate your study space with inspirational quotes and pictures.
- Accept that you will have productive and less productive days.
- Have healthy snacks nearby to boost your energy.
- Reward yourself every time you complete a challenging task.
- Make sure that you take some time for yourself from time to time.
- Stay positive and keep your chin up” (Pappas, 2015, eLearning Industry)

TEST TAKING STRATEGIES

When studying the module material, take notes. From the different sources of information that you are studying, try to imagine what questions will be on the tests. Before taking a test, you should be sure you understand what the covered material was attempting to convey. Here, the module outcomes of each study unit is key! Carefully read test instructions before beginning your test. Ask beforehand if you are unsure what resources you can use during your test and only use those specific resources. Ensure that you have a quiet environment to take your test and communicate to everyone in the house that you are taking a test. Be aware of time limits and only take your test when you have enough time. Don’t leave your test page, open a new window if you need to access another website (if allowed by your lecturer).

PERIODICALLY EVALUATE YOUR OWN PROGRESS

Review the module outcomes and assessment criteria often to determine if you are following them accurately. Keep a positive outlook when receiving feedback and in your attitude toward successfully completing the module.

PRACTICE SELF-CARE

Breaks form studying is also important. Connect with friends and family via WhatsApp call, FaceTime or Skype.

Try a home workout or a mindfulness activity on calm.com. Do your best to establish healthy sleeping and eating routines.