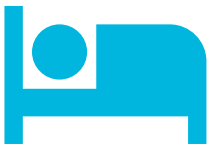


FEND OFF DIGITAL FATIGUE

THE SUDDEN, UNANTICIPATED SHIFT TO A VIRTUAL WORLD AS A RESULT OF THE PANDEMIC HAS REQUIRED US TO ADJUST TO A NEW WAY OF WORKING, LEARNING, AND SOCIALIZING. FINDING YOUR GROOVE IN A REMOTE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT CAN TAKE TIME AND A LOT OF TRIAL AND ERROR TO FIND WHAT WORKS BEST FOR YOU, HERE ARE A FEW TIPS TO HELP YOU FEND OFF DIGITAL FATIGUE DURING YOUR REMOTE TERM.

KEEP A CONSISTENT SLEEP SCHEDULE

Research has long shown that sleep is essential for learning. As such, it's one of the most beneficial habits you can develop as a student, and yet it's often the first thing to go out the window when life gets busy. Going to bed and waking at the same time every day regulates your biological clock, helping your body work more efficiently. It can be challenging to get into a routine at first but stick with it, and you'll notice improved concentration, stable energy throughout the day, increased immunity against illness, better digestion, and more! It's important to keep in mind that different bodies have different rhythms and needs when it comes to rest, but seven to nine hours of sleep per night is recommended for optimal wellness.



SCHEDULE YOUR TIME

With so many distractions and competing priorities beckoning at home - laundry, the latest binge-worthy Netflix series and the fridge, for example - it's easy to put off important tasks, but this ultimately causes work to pile up and stress to build over time. Creating an outline for your day will help you stay focused, keep on top of deadlines, and manage your energy effectively. Remember that just because there's no set schedule doesn't mean you can't make one for yourself. If your professors are recording lectures for you to view at your convenience, pick a recurring time to watch them each week as though you have set class time. Try using a digital calendar, paper agenda, or a notebook to map out your day and hold you accountable to your plan.



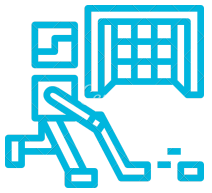
BREAK UP YOUR DAY

Your eyes, brain, and body need a break, especially when working at home, as we don't have the same naturally occurring breaks in our day - like walking between classes, getting up to fill your water bottle, and meeting your peers for lunch. We recommend taking at least one stretch break per hour to work out the kinks in your body and rest your eyes. If you think you might be most productive in short bursts, try using the Pomodoro Technique (described at end of article) to break up your study sessions. If you find yourself working through lunch, set the alarm on your phone to remind you to pause for a bite to eat and a glass of water. This will help you avoid that mid-afternoon crash that leaves you tired, unfocused, and irritable.



SET DAILY GOALS

Have you ever noticed that time goes by slowly when you have nothing to do, and flies past when you have an arm's-length list of things to get through? When you have a lot on the go, making a task list can feel overwhelming, which is why we suggest starting each day by choosing two to three priority tasks you want to accomplish and writing them down somewhere visible for built-in accountability. As you knock tasks off your list, give yourself a gratifying checkmark, and any tasks you don't complete can be added to tomorrow's list.



PREPARE LIKE YOU'RE GOING SOMEWHERE

If you had a school routine that worked for you before, find creative ways to get back into it. If you didn't, it's never too late to start a routine that helps you kick off your day on the right foot! Would you normally commute to campus? Take a walk around the block instead and go straight to your workspace upon your return. Does exercise help you feel awake and alert? Start your day with movement. Would you pack your lunch or take a shower and get changed into new clothes before you leave the house? Get into the habit of doing those things even if you don't plan to leave home. Although it can be fun to hang around in pajamas at first; however, the novelty wears off over time. Meanwhile, a lack of structure can blur the lines between work and play, impacting your focus, motivation, and productivity.



POMODORO TECHNIQUE (FRANCESCO CIRILLO)

- Set a timer for 25 minutes, and start your task. Use a phone or any online version.
- If a distraction pops into your head, write it down on a piece of paper and return to your task.
- When the buzzer rings, put a check mark on your paper. You've completed one increment, also known as a pomodoro.
- Take a five minute break. You can check the distractions that popped into your head, stretch, grab a cup of tea etc.
- After four pomodoros, take a thirty-minute break.
- Repeat!

BUILDING THESE STRATEGIES INTO YOUR LIFE IS A GREAT WAY TO FEND OFF DIGITAL FATIGUE THIS FALL SO THAT YOU CAN BE HEALTHY, HAPPY, AND SUCCESSFUL THIS SEMESTER.

INFORMATION COURTESY OF SARAH SYRETT, MSW

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