Flex@Pitt Studying and Exam-taking Tips

This resource can be used to help identify ways of decreasing distractions while at home and increasing your success in the Flex@Pitt learning environment!

# Manage Your Environment

Finding ways to manage your space can be challenging, whether you live alone or with others. Here are some suggestions for how to create a study or workspace that has reduced distractions and can increase your productivity.

## Remove as many distractions as possible

Place any items, objects, or technologies that are distracting in another location of your space. Turn off or silent all electronics that are not in use and remove them from your line of sight. Utilize applications or browser extensions to prevent additional screens from being open on your computer while you are working. Website blockers include “Cold Turkey” or “Focus” and writing-reward systems such as “Written? Kitten!”.

## Reduce noise

Our environment, despite our best efforts, can remain distracting through sound. To manage sound distractions, consider options such as a sound machine, soft music, noise cancelling headphones, or ear plugs. Be sure to select sounds and music that do not increase distractions for you! If you are easily distracted by words or speech, consider soundscapes, nature sounds, white noise, classical music, or acoustic playlists. Podcasts and lyric-based music are also options for those who are not easily distracted by the content of the show or playlist.

## Create a workspace

COVID has led to many people having to work within their living spaces. The work-life balance has been tested in many aspects, including students who are learning remotely. It’s important to maintain as much separation as possible from your daily living space and your work or school space to increase productivity and focus. Consider how you can recreate your space to enhance your success.

* Create a study corner
* Work at a designated desk or table
* Utilize a different room of your house or apartment for working
* Use room dividers, curtains, or furniture to distinguish a workspace
* Tri-fold presentation posters can be placed on desks during exams to reduce immediate visual distractions and create a sense of space separation when testing
* Limit the items at your desk or table to work-related objects

# Refine your study skills

While you may have had success in previous settings with your established study skills, consider trying new things to increase focus and productivity. Be sure you:

* Take breaks
* Manage how much time you will spend on certain tasks
* Create a schedule or lists to keep you on track
* Stay active when possible
* Get enough sleep
* Eat balanced meals

If you are interested in refining your skills further, check out the below resources:

* For those in the Dietrich School, you can connect with an Academic Coach to [Design your Personal Study Strategy](https://www.asundergrad.pitt.edu/study-lab/design-your-personal-study-strategy)! This resource can help you get the most out of your time at Pitt.
* Review a variety of tips and resources in the [Study Lab on Demand](https://www.asundergrad.pitt.edu/study-lab/study-lab-demand-0), including time management skills, note taking skills, active studying, and more!

Have additional tips or tricks that have helped you to succeed in the Flex@Pitt environment? Share them with us at [drsrecep@pitt.edu](mailto:drsrecep@pitt.edu)!