# 14 tips for succeeding in studying online at home

*The Library Teaching and Learning Support Team have gathered 14 pieces of advice for the new study situation. This will give you a good platform from where to thrive academically during Covid-19.*

*The advice is related to four categories:*

*Time Management Motivation Effective Study Resources and Support*

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| **Prepare yourself for "alternative assessments”** | Start your revision by reading through the guidelines for the new assessments to see what’s different and the learning outcomes for your course. Use a calendar to plan your revision backwards from the exam date to give your time more structure. And remember, although you’ll be given a longer window to complete remote exams (usually 24 or 48 hours), you aren’t meant to spend this whole time working on the exam. |
| **Stay motivated** | Stay motivated by breaking big, daunting tasks into smaller, more manageable goals. Goals should be SMART – Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Timeboxed (see below). Use the [Pomodoro Technique](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pomodoro_Technique) to time yourself while your studying then take a break to reflect and make any adjustments to how you’re approaching the task. |
| **Mix up your study topics.** | Educational research has shown that studying a few different topics/subjects/ideas in a single study session, Interleaved Study, is more effective than studying one topic per study session, Blocked Study. This is because switching between topics helps your mind find connections and make links between the topics - which means you learn each topic better. Don’t switch too often, though! |
| **Find it Use it! Reference it!** | If you need more help with finding, evaluating and referencing information go to the QMplus module:  <https://qmplus.qmul.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=6819> |
| **Find your routine** | Try to start your studies at the same time every day, schedule breaks at specific times – and set a finish time as well! Routines work well if self-discipline is not your strong point because they give your day a structure. |
| **Work with others** | Revise with others if you can. Form a revision group on WhatsApp. Share tasks like summarising readings or making notes on a certain topic. You will cover more ground together and learn more from having to make your revision notes understandable to others. |
| **Essay/project writing** | Writing a longer piece of text can sometimes feel unnerving. There is a bank of sound advice on how to stay focused on your topic, to organise your writing and to improve clarity, on this page: <http://learningdevelopment.qmul.ac.uk/writing> |
| **Find further resources/e-resources** | Wherever you are in the world, the best way to find and access Queen Mary Library resources is through Library Discovery. Access it from the Library website: [library.qmul.ac.uk](http://library.qmul.ac.uk). For updated advice on how to access Library resources during Covid-19 go to: [library.qmul.ac.uk/using-the-library/library-services-during-covid-19/](https://www.library.qmul.ac.uk/using-the-library/library-services-during-covid-19/) |
| **Timebox it!** | Ever noticed how if you have 5 days to write an essay it will take you 5 days - but it will take you 1 day if you have only a day. Timeboxing is a simple technique that uses that tendency to make your study more efficient. The trick is simple: when you set yourself a task, time box the task. Set yourself a fixed amount of time you will spend on the task. When that time is up - STOP! - that task and move on to the next one. |
| **Keep track of your reading** | A reference management tools like Endnote or Mendeley can help you keep track of the material you consulted while reading up on a topic, and enable you to reference them quickly in Word documents, It can be especially useful if you are dealing with many downloaded PDFs. |
| **Book a tutorial with an academic skills advisor** | Get advice from an Academic Skills tutor about your writing, reading technique or preparation for online exams. Book a tutorial at: <http://www.learningdevelopment.qmul.ac.uk/writingandstudy/tutorials> |
| **Don’t let yourself get distracted** | Your phone – and the Internet in general – can be your best friend and your worst enemy when you are studying. Ironically, you can use your phone to stop you using your phone! Anti--distraction apps work because they encourage you to concentrate and reward you for extended study. Four great apps are:   * [Forest](https://www.forestapp.cc/): Phone app blocker that gamifies your work schedule * [Cold Turkey](https://getcoldturkey.com/) : Desktop website blocker with built-in timers | * [Hold](https://www.hold.app/) : Incentives and rewards for not using your phone! * [Pomotodo](https://pomotodo.com/): Supports the Pomodoro time management technique |
| **Make annotations and notes without pen and paper** | Both Mendeley and Endnote can be used to annotate and write notes that stays with your references and becomes searchable. It is also possible to highlight passages and add sticky notes in PDF documents to remember important/pertinent passages when you come back to the document. In Mendeley you can also work collaboratively in groups. |
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