

# 10 TIPS

## Studying at Home Effectively

If you feel you need some tips on how to stay focussed on your studies, now all the courses are online, please, read the tips on this leaflet. These tips are based on scientific research carried out by the Cognitive Psychology Department, Neuro Psychology Department and Didactic Department, as well as internal research on motivation, inspiration and non-continuation at inHolland University.



### 1 Set Your Mind to Start Mode

Set your mind to go. In a way, you condition your mind and tell it 'We are going to get started soon'. If the ritual you select, like clearing your desk, helps you to study, you will kill two birds with one stone. You can also opt for other rituals like checking your favourite website, meditate or exercise. You are then ready to start studying.



### 2 A Clear Head

If your head is clear, you can concentrate much better. Piles of work sitting on your desk may cause distractions because it continuously emphasises what you still need to do. Clearing your desk also clears your head. Reminding yourself of all that still needs doing, will make you feel restless. Adding to-dos to your calendar, or a 'To-Do List' helps. Your subconscious will consider them 'completed'. Making lists can also help to spread the workload and prioritise.



### 3 Study Effectively and Frequently

Use timeslots and take regular breaks. A method proved to work is the [Pomodoro technique](#). Break down your day into 25- 50 minutes intervals of concentrated work and add short breaks. Go on longer breaks after you worked a few timeslots in a row. We can concentrate for 50 minutes; if you work like this, you will make the most of your day.



### 4 Coping with Distraction

Studying alone can be a challenge. Convenient escapes like social media or Netflix are lurking. Remain focussed and perhaps studying in online study groups like [StudyVibes](#) helps. You can motivate each other and see the others studying.



### 5 Be Realistic

Studying at home comes easier to some than others. It may be quite challenging if more of you are working from home (roommates/family). You will need to communicate when you have classes and try not to be too hard on yourself if you need time to get settled into this new reality.

Working from home is hard  
You are not the only one struggling



### 6 Eat, Sleep, Drink, Repeat

A good night's sleep, a healthy diet and staying hydrated are essential if you want to work from home effectively. The prefrontal cortex (the area in your brain for processing information and making decisions) needs rest. This means you need around 8 hours' sleep per night. Research has shown that being properly hydrated improves your concentration span. 5% dehydration means your concentration span decreases by 25%! Water and tea have a beneficial effect on your brain's neurotransmitters. Coffee and energy drinks however only give a temporary boost, so they are much less beneficial.



### 7 Exercise!

Sports and being active regularly are crucial to your health and concentration span. Research has shown that being active for 10 to 40 minutes is already beneficial to your health. Even a short, brisk walk can do the trick. Being active will increase your concentration span to up to three hours. When you are active, your self-confidence grows, you are ready to take on (difficult) assignments, you will experience less stress and sleep better. A win-win situation.

Many sports centres and schools offer online mindfulness, fitness and yoga courses. Add one online course to your daily schedule and try to simulate at least one other student to join an online course together.



### 8 Actively Attend Online Classes and Team Work.

Students who prepare for and attend all (online) classes, will have better results, fewer resits and obtain more credits!

This always applies, for both real-time and virtual environments. Contribute, collaborate.



### 9 Collaborate, Stay in Touch

It is important to determine who will be doing what and when, when working online. Be clear when the meetings will take place. There are many online tools available (see the practical tips below). Stay in touch with your lecturers and Study Coaches. Join online hangouts/meetings/social events.

"Look after each other"

(Mark Rutte, 16 March 2020)

## 10

### Asking for Help Is Not a Sign of Weakness

We expect students to be able to study independently. Do let us know if you feel you are stuck. Your Study Coach, fellow students or the Student Counsellor may be able to help you where motivation, teaching material or stress are concerned. Support and encourage each other; having someone to talk to is often all that is needed.

### A Few More Practical Tips

- Pay attention to your posture when working behind a laptop for hours on end.
- Close all the apps you will not be using before logging on to online classes.
- Go offline at least one hour before you go to sleep. [Further info](#).
- Use the [Kanban method](#). A Kanban Board will show you at a glance, exactly what you have to do and what was already completed.
- [Trello](#) is a convenient app to use when working together. You can see exactly who is working on what.

Courtesy of InHolland University