How to do Well in an Online Course

- ✓ Making a Plan for Success
- ✓ Managing Your Time
- ✓ Communicating is Key with Your classmates and Professors
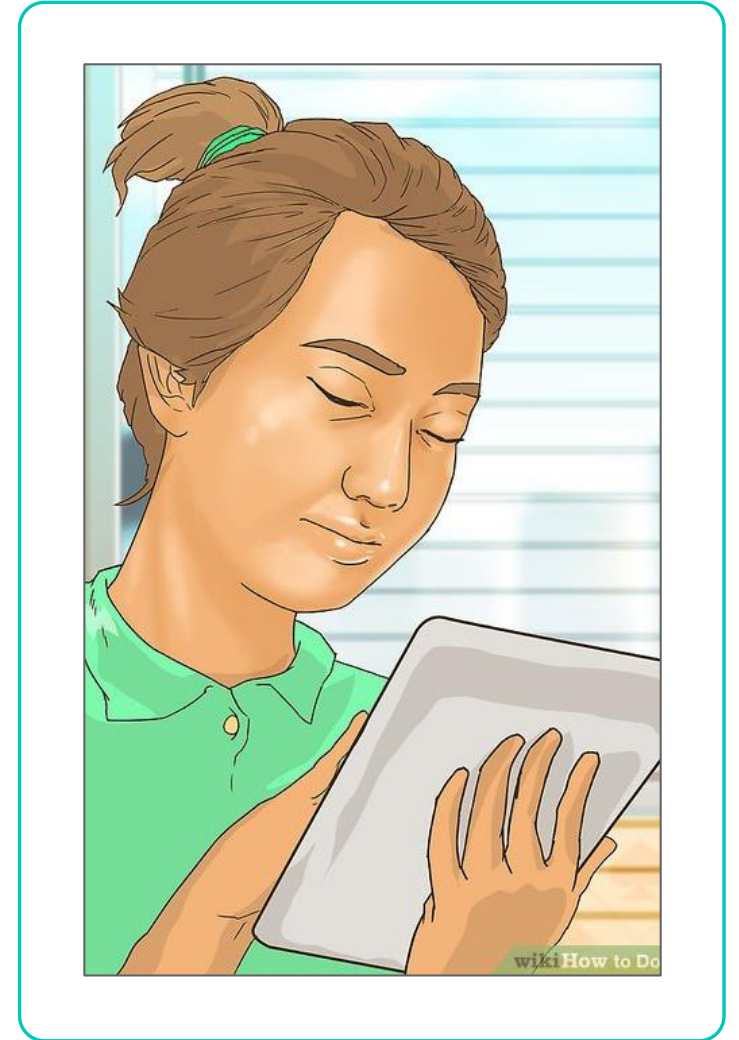
Making a Plan for Success

➢ **Be realistic about your expectations.** Before you pay for an online course, you should be realistic about your ability to manage your time and to follow a structured schedule for the course. Ensure that you have enough time to dedicate to studying, finishing your assignments, and passing the class.

➢ This course will be taught at a college level. If you feel uncertain about your abilities to complete college-level coursework, this might not be the best option for you.

➢ If you're not confident in your computer skills, you should consider strengthening them before taking an online course. It might be a good idea to narrow down the list of most needed skills to just a few items to make sure you can develop those skills in time before the course begins.

Making a Plan for Success

➢ **Carefully read the class requirements and syllabus**. Many courses will list a summary of what the course will cover, a syllabus of the work that will be required, or have pre-requisites that you must complete prior to the course.

➢ If you are taking this online course for a degree program, make sure that you have completed any pre-requisites for the course.

➢ If you are attending another college, but taking this online course through a different university, check with your university to make sure that this credit will be accepted towards your degree.

➢ Purchase or borrow any required textbooks or course materials prior to the start date of your class.

Making a Plan for Success

➢ **Confirm you meet the technical requirements.** For most online college courses, you will need to ensure that you have enough hard drive memory and that you are using the most up to date operating systems for your laptop or desktop computer. If you do not meet these requirements, the online course module may not work correctly and you will be unable to complete the course.[1] Though you may be able to use a public computer, like one at the library, it's better to have a personal computer you can rely on to complete an online course.

➢ Technical courses may have specific requirements for the amount of RAM, hard drive space available, and the operating system that you use.

➢ You will need consistent and reliable access to the Internet for your course.

➢ Hone and practice your computer skills if you are uncertain whether they are strong enough for the course. You can even enroll in a brief computer literacy class before starting the course.

Making a Plan for Success

➢ **Connect with your professor.** Beginning the course with a good relationship with your professor can be a very helpful way to establish a good rapport with them for the rest of the course.

➢ Before the course begins, reach out to your professor. This can be a simple email introducing yourself to the instructor and letting them know that you're excited to begin the course with them.

➢ If you ever have the opportunity to speak with your professor in person, take advantage of it.

wikiHow to Do Well in an Online College Cou

Making a Plan for Success

➢ **Notify your employer that you are taking classes.** If you work part time or full time, you should let your employer know that you are taking college classes online so they are aware of your time restrictions. If you work full time, see if your employer offers tuition reimbursement or tuition reimbursement. If you have an HR department, they will be the best resource for this inquiry.[2]

➢ If you work part time or have a flexible work schedule, ensure that your work schedule does not conflict with your study schedule or any scheduled class times.

➢ If you have children at home, arrange childcare before the course begins. It can be very difficult to focus on online coursework if you are caring for children at the same time. Arrange for consistent childcare during the times you know will be doing coursework and studying.[3]
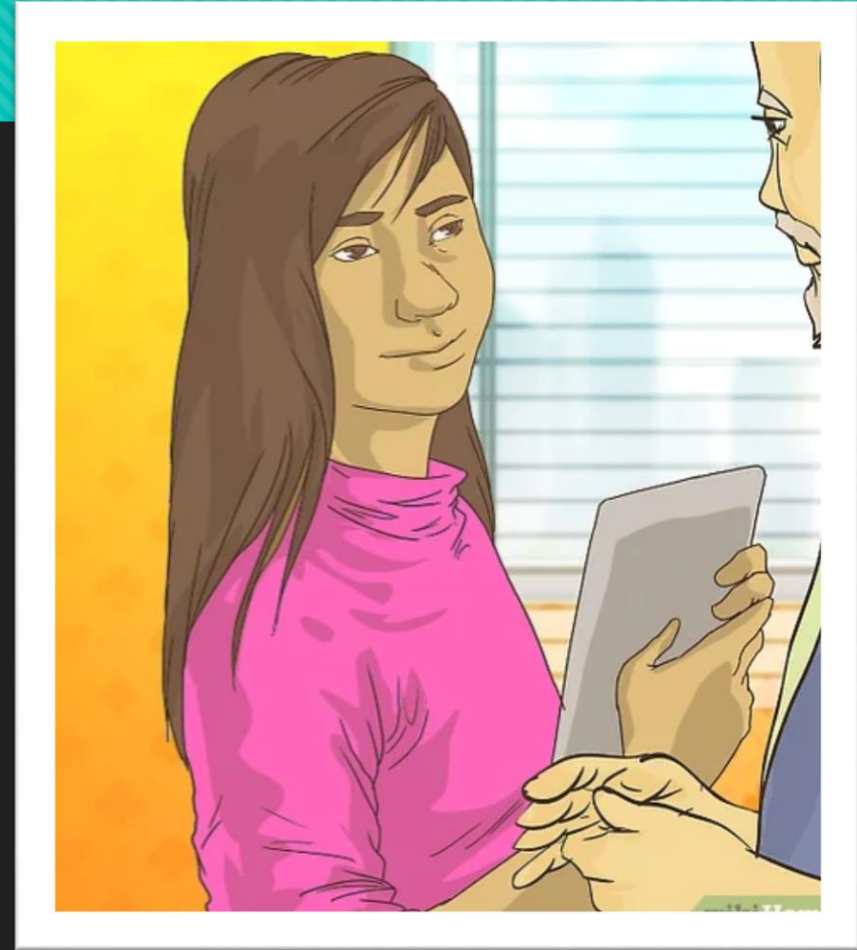
Managing Your Time

➢ **Set up a dedicated workspace.** Find a place where you will be able to consistently work and study without distractions. If you plan to do classwork at home, make sure that you will not be distracted by family members or roommates while you're working.

➢ Cafes and coffee shops usually have consistent Internet access. Check with the owner to make sure that you are able to occupy a table for extended amounts of time.

➢ Libraries are a good option if you prefer to work in a quiet space. Many have desktop computers available for your use, which is helpful if you do not have a laptop.

➢ Many public parks offer free wifi. You may find it relaxing to study in the park, as long as there are no distractions nearby.
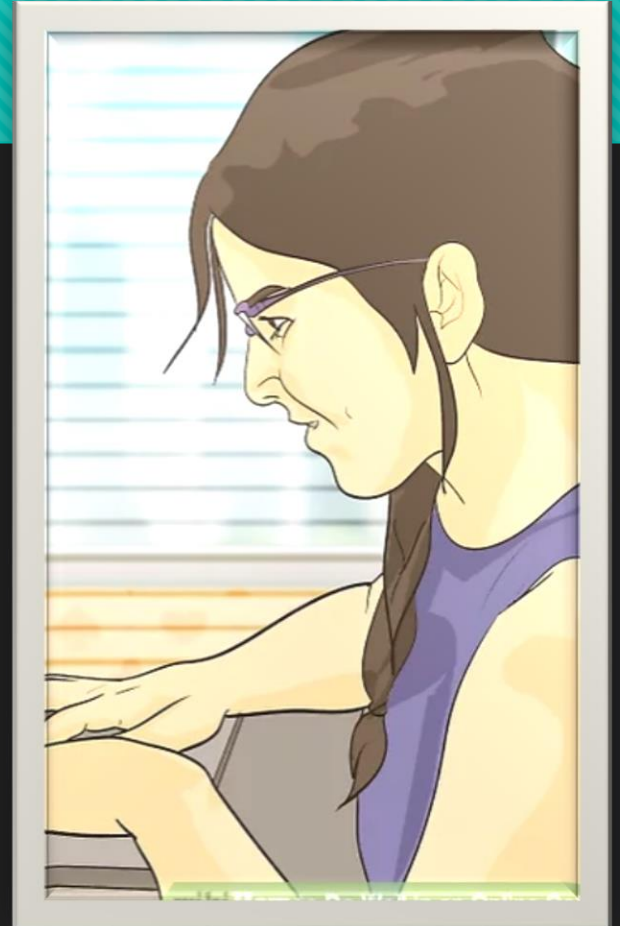
Managing Your Time

➤ **Make a list of course due dates.** As soon as you receive the course syllabus, write down the due dates for any important assignments, papers, and exams.

➤ Many online courses require online assignment submissions to be made by a certain time. If each weekly assignment is due at 5pm on Sunday, make sure to note this specific time so you can keep your assignment submissions organized.

➤ Use a paper planer or online calendar to keep all of your assignment dates organized and accessible.

➤ If you are taking more than one course at a time, create a master list that has each of your course assignment due dates listed.

➤ Each week, organize your schedule and make a priority list for assignments that are due that week.

Managing Your Time

- **Create a study schedule.** A study schedule will help you to stay organized as you progress through the course, and will help you manage your time efficiently.

- Be as detailed as possible in your schedule. Plan ahead and take in to account any outside commitments that you've made like vacations or doctors visits that will disrupt your normal schedule.

- Use the list of assignment due dates that you wrote down at the beginning of the course to set aside time to study for large exams and to complete projects or papers.

- Stick to the schedule that you set for yourself. You will need to follow your schedule to accomplish your coursework on time.

- Create weekly to-do lists that map out your assignment deadlines and required coursework.[4]

Managing Your Time

➤ **Take detailed notes**. Take detailed notes for each of your class readings and lectures either by hand or in an online document.[5]

➤ Be prepared to take notes during each online lecture. Organized and detailed notes will be your best study tools to prepare for exams. It can be tempting to zone out or not pay attention during online lectures since you aren't physically in a classroom, but taking notes can help you to avoid this temptation.

➤ Keep your notes in a centralized and organized space. If you take notes by hand, dedicate a large notebook or binder to holding all of your notes. If you take notes on your laptop, create an online file to hold all of your notes in one place.

Managing Your Time

➢ **Meet course deadlines.** Your online course will have specific deadlines for assignments, just as any other class would. Always meet these deadlines and produce your best work on assignments.

➢ Online courses are great for independent learners since you are held accountable for your ability to follow a syllabus and meet deadlines outside of a physical classroom. You must reliably meet deadlines and turn in your work on time. Missing deadlines can have a large negative impact on your grade.[6]

➢ Plan ahead if you know that you have a busy week coming up so you won't have to struggle to get your work done.

Communication is Key

- ➤ **Participate in discussions.** Many online courses require students to participate in discussion board about class topics. Posts on a discussion board often count as participation points and are an important part of your grade.

- ➤ Consistently post your responses or assignments to the discussion board on time and make meaningful additions to the discussion.

- ➤ Class discussions are also a great way to connect with your online classmates.

wikiHow to Do Well in an Online College

Communication is Key

➤ **Reach out to other online students.** Online learning can feel isolating, especially if you are completing your degree completely online. Connecting with other online learners can foster a sense of community.

➤ Some online classes may require group work during the course. While it can be challenging to complete assignments with students that you cannot physically meet with, group work is a great incentive to connect with your online classmates.

➤ Reach out to the online university that you are taking the class through. Many universities offer community websites and ways to connect with other online learners.[7]

➤ If you find that you can meet with another online classmate in person, take this opportunity to get to know your classmate and arrange for a group study session.

Communication is Key

➢ **Keep in touch with your professor.** Maintain your relationship with your professor throughout the course by communicating with them about assignments and exams.

➢ Since most of your communication with your professor and peers will be through writing, you must be comfortable reaching out through written communications like email.[8]

➢ Always keep your communications with professors professional and courteous, just as you would with any other instructor.

➢ Do not hesitate to reach out to the professor if you are struggling to understand a class concept or if you have questions.

wikiHow to Do Well in an Onli