

# Tips for Being a Successful Digital Learner

*This handout is for students wanting to make the most of their digital learning experiences. It contains suggestions around staying connected, organized, strategic and well. Skim through the document to see if any ideas resonate with you.*

## 1. **Stay Connected.** It is important to stay connected with your instructors so they can support you in making the most of engaging in your digital learning experiences. Make sure that you:

- **Identify your devices.** Let your instructor know what device(s) you have access to
- **Provide alternative ways** that your instructor can connect with you as a back-up (e.g., phone number, preferred email address)
- **Let your instructor know of any limitations you might have in connecting** (e.g., having to share a laptop with a family member; difficulty accessing the Internet; no laptop/computer access)
- **Do a Speed Test** ([Speedtest.net](https://www.speedtest.net) or [Fast.com](https://www.fast.com)) of your Internet speed. It is often recommended to have at least 50 Mbps to manage class video conferencing meetings. You can have success with less than this speed.



*Photo by Jess Bailey on Unsplash*

- **Optimize Bandwidth:** Take steps to optimize your bandwidth if you are needing to access your courses, BlueJeans or Blackboard course activities etc. (e.g., exit other applications, turn off other devices using the internet such as Netflix, ask family members to pause downloading or gaming use)
- **Connect with friends** who are studying or connect with other classmates. You can do this via the course site set up by your instructor through Blackboard Learn, or other platforms such as [Google Hangouts](https://www.google.com/hangouts), BlueJeans, Zoom etc.
- **Collaborate.** Working together with classmates to brainstorm ideas may help you with course assignments. Share ideas and save to Student OneDrive and share with other students, collaborate on shared document creation.

**Tip: Contact Student Technical Services for any technical questions you may have.**

## 2. Stay Organized. Many of us are out of our usual daily routine and if that is the case, it is important to create a new one. This will help you stay focused and on track. Make sure that you:

- **Plan your day /study** around a list of activities you need to complete
  - **Check off each task** once it is done. Do your least favourite task first.
  - **Tell others your schedule.** Let your household know your schedule so they give you space during those times (recognizing this might be hard in some circumstances)
  - **Establish a regular schedule,** such as the time you get up and go to bed
- **Take regular breaks.** If you are spending all day in front of a screen, be sure to get up every 30 minutes to stretch. If it is safe to do so, go for a short walk a couple of times a day to get some fresh air (practicing good physical distancing protocol)
- **Create a ‘work only’ space;** it helps to establish boundaries between ‘work/study’ and ‘relaxing.’ (e.g., sit at the kitchen table when working/studying and sit on the sofa using the laptop if you are connecting with friends)
- **Create a weekly / monthly plan** so you can see where you have important deadlines coming up. Make the plan easily visible (e.g., a poster on the fridge, reminders in your phone etc.)



Photo by Jess Bailey on Unsplash

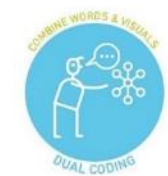
**Tip: the NIC Library & Learning Commons staff can help you with research, writing and math supports.**

## 3. Stay Strategic. This is a great time to explore different learning strategies and to find the ones that work best for you. For example:

**Learn how to learn.** There are various strategies you can use to learn.

- **Elaboration** – Explain and describe ideas with many details
- **Retrieval practice** – Practice bringing information to mind
- **Concrete examples** – Use specific examples to understand abstract ideas
- **Spaced practice** – Space your studying over time
- **Interleaving** – Switch between ideas while you study
- **Dual Coding** – pair graphics with words

For more information see website: [Six Strategies for Effective Learning](#)



### Avoid procrastination.

- **Think about what is stopping you getting started** and think about how to get around that block. For example, if the study task seems 'too big,' break it down into smaller steps and start with the first step.
- **Get rid of distractions.** Switch off your phone, close your email, switch off the television. Give yourself a specific time to take a break, something to look forward to.
- **Keep a time diary.** Fill in this [diary](#) for a few days to identify where you might be 'wasting' time, time that you could use more effectively.
- **Use the 5-step plan.** Use this [plan](#) to help you plan your studies.
- **Take notes.** Have different folders (electronic or physical) for each course you are taking. Take notes when you are reading and add those notes to the appropriate file. Do not forget to write down citations/references as you go along.



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## 4. **Stay Well.** If you are not taking care of your physical, mental, and emotional well-being, everything else in life becomes much harder. Choose the strategies that work best for you. If you try something and it does not work, try something else. Make sure you:

- **Stay connected** with family and friends. This is especially important if you are on your own. There are multiple digital platforms available, and many are free, so use whichever is easiest for you –FaceTime, Messenger, Zoom, Discord. It is great to be able to see other people but if that is not possible, a phone call can do the trick.
- **Get enough good quality sleep.** It can be tempting to stay up late, watching another episode on Netflix. That episode will be available tomorrow. Go to sleep.
- **Eat properly.** Recognizing that grocery shopping is currently a little different, do try and plan your meals so that you are getting the food your brain and your mood need (subtext, sugary food is not your friend).
- **Ask for help.** If you need advice, [NIC advisors](#) and [recruiters](#) are available to answer any of your questions. For information about financial supports available, book an appointment with one of the NIC advisors or visit the following site: [www.nic.bc.ca/financial-support/](http://www.nic.bc.ca/financial-support/). The NIC [Student Employment Services](#) team is available through phone or BlueJeans.



*Photo by Kate Stone Matheson on Unsplash*

- **Help others.** Research shows that helping others is a great way of improving how we feel about ourselves. If it is safe for you to do so, offer to do someone’s grocery shopping. Know someone else is having a hard time? Give them a call and just listen; be ‘there’ for them.
- **Limit time on social media.** The amount of news coverage of the current world situation is overwhelming. While it is important to stay up to date with what is going on, make sure you don’t become overloaded by this. Stick to accessing news sources that you know are reliable. This is a great time to practice learning the difference between fake news and legitimate news sources. Seek out positive news stories to balance out the negative ones.
- **Reach out.** You may feel alone; you are not. If you have worries or thoughts you would rather not discuss with family or friends, there are many supports to help you. You can book an appointment with an NIC Counsellor by [booking an appointment online](#).
- **Practice compassion** – with yourself and with others. Kindness is what we all need. Recognize that we are all doing our best, and that includes you.



*Photo by Caleb Gregory on Unsplash*

**Tip: NIC's [Counselling page](#) also has a full list of resources, including those available 24/7.**



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