

Survival Tips for On-line Courses

1. **Familiarize yourself with the course design.** Study the syllabus. Make sure you understand not only what is required, but when it is required, and how to do each requirement.
2. **Read the entire course syllabus.** The distance learning course syllabus contains all of the information the student needs to progress through a distance learning course. This includes information about the course description, objectives, and requirements, course meetings, assignments and testing, media and technology used, a course calendar or assignment schedule, and support contact information.
3. **Be Realistic.** You will not have to keep a class attendance schedule, but you will have to do regular academic work. Remember you should be spending at least three study hours each week for every credit you are taking. So if there is insufficient time in your personal schedule to do the work of the course, you will be frustrated.
4. **Set interim goals and deadlines for yourself, and stick to them.** Keep a calendar showing the number of weeks in the semester and mark it off with the amount of work you need to do each week. Mark in the days when you will expect to take tests, submit projects, contact the instructor. Don't fall behind in your work! Keep reminding yourself that you will always have more to do near the end of a course than at the beginning.
5. **Organize your goals in a study schedule.** Identify study times when you are fresh and attentive and stick to those times every week. Think of the study times as "reserved time." If you miss too many study times, revise your schedule.
6. **Avoid interruptions.** Avoid all interruptions and distractions while you are viewing a video program, listening to a cassette, reading the textbook, working on the computer, or studying. Take the telephone off the hook if there is no one available to answer it but you.
7. **Know where to study.** Find a place that is free from distractions. You might consider work--before or after hours and on your lunch hour--a public library, or a separate room in your home.
8. **Stay in touch with your instructor.** Contact your instructor regularly, especially when you have questions about course content materials. Instructors are available by phone and/or email, or you may make an appointment for an on-campus meeting.
9. **Prepare for assignments and tests.** In distance learning, course assignments could involve the use from different mediums: print, videos, audios, and the Internet. Remember you are not just watching or listening. You are learning from the information on those various mediums. Take notes. Imagine questions that might be on a test from your study guide, from your textbook, from videos or audiotapes, or from the Internet course assignments.
10. **Use good communication skills.** Pay careful attention to instructions and be certain that you understand what is being asked when submitting assignments. It often helps to develop a brief outline before responding to questions whether they are submitted in writing, via e-mail, orally or on video/audio tape.

<http://www.mtsu.edu/%7Estudskl/onlinetips.html>