

Advice from Abbi Jutkowitz, Film Editor, who has worked from home on and off for 5+ years, and worked from home exclusively for the past 8 months (<https://www.imdb.com/name/nm1631659/>), in collaboration with Courtney Gibbons, Math Professor, who has worked from home for the last week (<https://people.hamilton.edu/cgibbons>).

Remote Semester “Orientation”

Guiding Principles

Lower your expectations. Then:

1. Develop a plan to satisfy your expectations!
2. Put the plan into action—do the ideas.
3. Evaluate which actions worked and which did not; tweak the plan.
4. Repeat steps 1-3 until you are able to raise expectations. Then:

Repeat steps 1-4 until you feel comfortable.

(The goal is to have a plan that is “good enough” without further tweaking, not to be endlessly tweaking.)

Plan Elements

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Distractions / Focus

- Block out times with specific objectives, and find ways to support your schedule.
 - Use a napkin, a planner, a web calendar, or whatever works for you to have a reference for your time management.
- Some specific objectives might be...
 - email time - clear out your inbox;
 - class time - complete homework problems / write a draft of a paper;
 - social time - have Zoom breakfast with your breakfast crew / update your insta story
- Some tech options include
 - Google Apps suite - Google Calendar, Google Tasks for organizing deadlines and specific tasks
 - Gmail extensions like Boomerang or Pause Inbox to catch up on existing email without being distracted by new email

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Work Space

- Adopt the mindset that wherever you work is your workspace and therefore should not be used for anything else *while you are working*.
 - For example, if you want to work in bed, do so, but only if you are able to focus and not sleep or do anything else you'd normally do in a bed
- When you are in your workspace, designate to yourself and family members/housemates that you are working and therefore not to be disturbed. Be creative.
 - Hang a sock or tie or Hamilton swag on your door
 - If in a shared room, put a noticeable item on your desk
 - If not using a desk, put a binder clip or something similar clipped to your book or screen
- Create the soundscape you need
 - If you desire silence, use noise-canceling headphones (if possible)
- For working with some background noise which is not music, try <https://coffitivity.com/>



Routines

- One of the benefits of taking classes at Hamilton is that its residential setting comes with lots of routines: classes, meals, sports, clubs, office hours, etc. To the extent possible, identify your Hamilton daily/weekly routine and imagine recreating it at home.
 - Breakfast with pals → breakfast with the family?
 - Class time → class time / engage with asynchronous course materials/office hours if that is what your professor has scheduled
 - Sports time → do people still have ShakeWeights?

(Remember that this is your first draft of your plan!)



Managing Conflict

Family / Roommates

- Set your expectations with your cohabitants and come up with a plan in advance for resolving difficulties.
 - “Do not disturb me when the binder clip is on my laptop; it means I’m ‘at college’ -- when there’s no binder clip, I can help you around the house if you need me.”

Classmates / Instructors

- This is new territory for your classmates and your instructors, too. Adopt an attitude of compromise, compassion, and positivity before addressing issues with your campus colleagues. Your constructive criticism will be extremely helpful to your instructors (and collaborator classmates), but the circumstances of the semester may make it difficult for anyone to respond rapidly to even the simplest and best advice.
- Remember too that your instructors are invested in your success, even though it may be harder to “see” that investment without in-person meetings.
- With all that in mind: Express your needs, frustrations, and concerns clearly, openly, and kindly.
 - *Professor Gibbons says: I would always rather know what’s going on for you, my students, than try to guess or anticipate.*



Health & Wellness

- We’re in a global pandemic! Take care of yourself and your loved ones first and foremost.



Be well!