Stress BUSTERS
The academic challenge

Coping with online learning

Online learning is a concept that you may have had to adjust and adapt to in a relatively short period of time. It can be anxiety provoking and quite stressful. Remember that this is a new experience for almost all – students and academic staff. There are surely many questions, which may not all be easily answered. So please be patient with yourself as you transition. Here are a few tips we put together on how you could possibly cope with the stress of online learning

- There are multiple support networks available at Wits (online library resources and Sakai). For any technical queries contact ICT Helpdesk: ithelp@wits.ac.za or log a query via https://witshelp-ism.saasiteu.com or visit www.wits.ac.za/mywits for details

- Look for silver linings. It might be difficult, but try new technologies - you will learn a new skill

- You're not alone. Stay connected with lecturers, tutors and classmates. Use Wits-e forums, use email, WhatsApp

- Attend your online sessions and don't be afraid to ask for help

- Stay informed by reading through notification on your Wits e-Learning platforms (eg SAKAI, Moodle or Canvass) especially concerning data access, Sakai course notifications/announcements and CCDU services etc

- Allow yourself to grieve: Our familiar ways of learning make us feel comfortable and competent. It's ok to mourn those when you can't use them

- Remember that all the same rules to working and studying still apply – Stay motivated; keep your goals in mind; practice good time management to help keep you on top of your deadlines

- Consider information on studying at: https://www.wits.ac.za/ccdu/study-skills/

Develop a positive mindset

- Develop a **'can-do'** attitude
- Develop a plan to grow - Step back, look at the bigger picture, identify areas you think you need to improve on and do it
- Develop perspective. Be more curious, be more spontaneous, seek feedback and self-reflect

Manage time effectively

- Plan; don't leave anything to chance
- Use your time efficiently
- Create a work calendar/weekly planner, listing all commitments, submissions, tests and exams
- Procrastination is only delaying the inevitable. Beat the urge by setting out daily to-do lists
- Avoid analysing everything you do, once finished, move on to the next task – if you have time at the end come back to it

Take back control
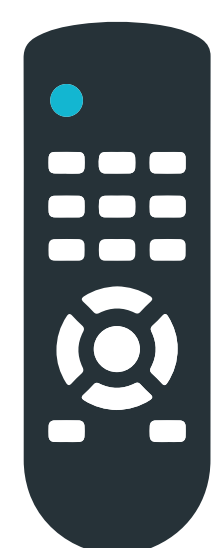
- If you find yourself procrastinating on a task or are having trouble focusing: **Re-look at your motivation/goals to help you past the procrastinating; use a timer to get you working again**

- **Control your environment.** Manage your environment well; set up a clean workspace, get plenty of natural light and fresh air, keep your study material together, etc.

- **Control your technology.** Increase your attention by decreasing distractions. When you really need to focus, it's critical to work offline, silence your devices and put them out of sight

- **Control your focus.** Work only on today's important tasks. It's very easy to feel unfocused when you don't have a good priority list. *What do you need to work on first?*

Rest

- One of the most efficient ways to boost your brain function is to take regular breaks and to respect your attention span

- Move around and work in blocks. Even if you're staying in the one place, breaking your work into chunks and setting milestones as stopping points can be a good way to work. Build breaks into your work day

- Spend time in nature, it lets our minds relax and unwind, helping us to focus for longer when we return to work

- Taking naps, exercising; socialising (even digitally); relaxation/visualisation/meditation, etc. are all forms of resting in between study sessions

On reaching out

When things seem a bit tough, it's ok to ask for assistance or reach out to others around you. Especially now with the lockdown, the health risks and the different ways of having to learn.

Sometimes the task might seem as trivial as doing a chore or perhaps it's just the need to talk to someone; maybe it's just the need for a friendly shoulder to lean on. Reach out to a lecturer, tutor, course mate, a family member or friend. They could assist or direct you to other sources of help.

If you need to talk to a therapist you can get in touch with the CCDU;

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visit our 🌐 or @ info.ccdu@wits.ac.za (Mon-Fri; 8am – 16h30pm)

or call the 24-hour Wits Student Crisis Line – **0800 111 331**