

10 Tips for Students in Times of Corona

Our experienced psychologists at the Psychological Counseling Center of the Studierendenwerk Mannheim will show you how to help manage the contact restrictions or a quarantine.

1. Keep a daily schedule!

Wake up at a regular time each day (between 6 a.m. for early risers and 10 a.m. for those who sleep in) and try not to get more than 8-9 hours of sleep each night. As nice as it can be to sit around on the weekends in your pajamas and chill, it is helpful on the weekdays to get up and shower, put on clothes to have the feeling of being active and full of energy. In the same way, the usual eating, studying, and sleeping patterns can help.

2. Plan your day!

A plan can prevent feelings of helplessness and loss of control. Instead of just letting the day passively pass on, try to shape it actively. Set a fixed date for things you need to do (watching lectures online, studying, cleaning, doing laundry, and cooking) and things you would like to do (reading, watching a series, call friends, doing sports, yoga...) These things fall into different categories depending on the person. It is important that you consciously set priorities and create a good mixture of tasks and rewarding activities. Be aware of the times of day in which you are most mentally awake and productive so you can place your learning phases into these time slots if possible. Try planning the evening before, so you can know what to expect the next day and can start motivated. Do not plan the whole day though. Always leave some free time to enjoy.

3. Control your media usage!

Do not spend all your time on your phone, computer, or game console. Enjoy a good movie or game - but do not spend multiple hours sticking to it. Try to find out what else your body can do and try out a new skill. (See tip number 4)



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4. Search for meaningful projects!

Is there something you always wanted to do but have pushed it back due to a lack of time? There is a large spectrum: from spring-cleaning to crafts, puzzling, gardening, writing a diary, learning a new language, taking part in online courses... Divide your project into small portions and set moderate goals to work on each day.

5. Keep moving!

Movement is your body's own medicine against brooding and negativity. By moving, you show your brain with every fiber: There's more!

It does not have to be a high-performance sport, but a walk in the fresh air or a home-workout does your body good. You can find many good tips about working out without machines online. Start small: 5-10 minutes daily is better than once for two hours and then never again. Treat yourself to a daily ration of outdoor exercise to get some sun and allow for a change of scenery.

6. Stay in contact!

Keep in contact as much as possible. Set up regular phone calls, chats, or video calls. Use the time to get back in touch with "old friends". Tired of talking? Surprise your friends with a postcard, letter, or long e-mail. Try to talk about the positive things during your day and try to avoid common whining. Alternatively, you also can write for yourself - morning pages, diary, or a blog....

7. Don't become a COVID-19 expert!

Stay informed (once per day is enough) about the current situation, but do not overdo it. Identify and stay with a few channels of information, but avoid jumping from one headline to the next. Try not to let this crisis be the only topic for you.



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8. Strengthen your resilience!

Use this chance to begin strengthening your “psychological immune system”, because small or big crises occur from time to time in life. A good mental resilience helps you in overcoming them and in emerging stronger.

Be aware that this is a very exceptional situation to which you will have to adjust to. This of course involves uncertainties. Also accept negative feelings such as helplessness or being overwhelmed; they are quite normal in this current situation. Especially now, it is important to deal with your feelings and thoughts in a sympathetic, friendly way toward yourself to strengthen your resilience, instead of expecting from yourself that feelings and thoughts won't affect you. If you spend 5-20 minutes a day, i.e. learning a relaxation method (progressive muscle relaxation, autogenic training, etc.), doing mindfulness practice or accepting the unchangeable, among other things, you are doing something to increase your inner strength in the long run. Resilience can be learned.

9. Remember your strengths!

If you are feeling down, think about what you like about yourself, what you are good at and what positive qualities and experiences you have in your life and what you have already overcome. Do not give up right away if it is hard to come up with such things at first - this is quite normal when you're in a negative mood. Ask friends and family what they like about you. People who like you will surely come up with a lot.

10. Seek help!

If you are in a crisis and your thoughts keep going around and around and you cannot stand being in your room anymore, seek professional assistance. Contact the Psychological Counseling Center (PBS) of the Studierendenwerk for example - we are available to you by telephone during our operating hours Monday - Thursday: 8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m., Friday: 8:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m., Telephone: 0621 49072-555. After the first contact by telephone, further counseling by telephone is available.

Other helpful contacts for emergencies can be found on our homepage:

https://www.stw-ma.de/en/assistance_in_a_crisis

