**CREATE A SCHEDULE:**

You might find your original routine no longer fits your new environment. Using organization tools to build structure into a new routine and set times for the essentials such as meals, sleep, class, and time to socialize may be helpful. Consider:

- Keeping your schedule consistent from week-to-week.
- Writing down all the assignments and deadlines you have based on your new schedule.
- Making time for breaks so you have a chance to re-group between commitments. On that note, consider scheduling 5 minute breaks to stretch or move around every 30-60 minutes.

**SET UP YOUR WORKSPACE:**

When navigating a new environment, you might find yourself easily distracted or working longer than you anticipated. As you're able to, try to identify distractions and remove them from your space. If that's not possible, you might try:

- Dedicating a comfortable work space that’s separate from the spaces you relax or sleep. That way, you're better prepared to mentally detach from work when you're trying to relax.
- Negotiating and setting expectations around your needs with those you live with early may help you find balance while also helping you avoid misunderstandings in the future.
- Focusing on one task or assignment at a time and moving on to the next when you've come to a good stopping point.
- If a lot of screen time is required, try the 20-20-20 rule. For every 20 minutes spent looking at a screen, looking at something 20 feet away for 20 seconds can provide a good break for your eyes and can help you re-focus.

**USE EXISTING COPING TOOLS:**

Everyone has coping tools that they’ve found effective in other settings, whether on campus or in other situations. Some of those same strategies may still be helpful, including:

- If you’re able to, get outside to break up your day, even for a short walk to the end of your block.
- Take media breaks! The news can be overwhelming; unplugging from the headlines and hashtags for a bit or unfollowing certain accounts or pages that contribute to your negative feelings may help reduce your stress.
- Focusing on the present moment. Practicing mindfulness can be helpful, whether you gently direct your attention elsewhere or do a guided meditation.
- Practice self-compassion by reflecting on your feelings and giving yourself permission to feel as you do without judgement. Journaling or talking with a mental health professional may help you through this process.
- Prioritizing your health needs by eating nutritious foods, staying active, and getting the sleep your body needs.

**STAY CONNECTED:**

In a time when most individuals are working and learning remotely, it’s natural to feel lonely or isolated. It’s also possible that you’re less motivated to attend classes or complete assignments. It might help to:

- Find a buddy to check in with; you can create an agreement on the best ways to hold each other accountable for attending class or working on assignments. You could also check in with each other if you’re starting to lose motivation.
- Schedule time to talk on the phone, through video chat, or over email with family, friends, and other loved ones. Doing so might be able to give you a much needed emotional boost!
- Pencil in time to engage in fun virtual activities with loved ones so you have something to which you can look forward.

*Not everyone learns or works the same way, and it takes some trial and error to figure it out. Give yourself some grace and know that you're not alone! Reach out to resources such as health.columbia.edu for other information and support during this time.*