Campuses across the nation have decided, in the wake of COVID-19 (aka coronavirus), to have their students attend classes remotely. Some are doing it because of a case of COVID-19 on campus, while others are doing so as a preventative measure. So how do we adjust to this new—albeit temporary—reality? Here are some tips on adapting to a remote schedule without missing a beat.

It's Not Spring Break 2.0.

In the “real world,” working from home does not mean that you have the day off. It means you’re working—at home. Or at a coffee shop or a co-working office or another dedicated work space. The same goes for remote-campus life. All your assignments will still be due on the days that your professor asks for them, and you should still be keeping up with your reading, homework, and usual study routine. It’s also crucial that you actually attend your online classes if there is a remote lecture or demonstration scheduled. While school moving to the virtual space may be a new experience for everyone, the important thing to remember is that classes are still your number-one priority, and it’s critical to follow your professor’s instructions so that you don’t fall behind.
Make Sure You Have What You Need.

Not having materials isn’t a valid excuse for not producing the work that you’re expected to, even when working from home. So be sure that you have all the reading materials, problem sets, and whatever else you need to do your assignments. Luckily, most of these things are probably on your computer in some way. But be sure to check out which campus facilities are open in the event that your laptop fails you at the exact wrong moment. Most campuses that have gone remote have kept the library open, but what about the science labs or art studios? If materials or resources that you need are not available to you for one reason or another, communicate this to your professor, and ask for guidance.

This goes double for any students with a disability. If you require large-print readings, audio materials, an interpreter for Skype lectures, or any other accommodation, be sure that you’re getting the resources you need. If necessary, remind your school administration and professors that you need these accommodations.

Don’t Fall Prey to the Distraction Game.

This is a common mistake for people that work from home, particularly those who don’t do it regularly. Home is where all our distractions live: TVs, chatty roommates, rude upstairs neighbors. Not to mention that, generally, home is where we relax. So getting into “work mode” while at home can be a struggle. Run defense on distractions when it’s time for you to work: Shut the door to your room, put away things like your phone or game consoles that can pull your focus, use headphones if you like music more than the sound of your upstairs neighbors. Make yourself a distraction-free zone.

Keep the Lines of Communication Open.

Your best bet in this situation is to pay attention to what your professors tell you. In light of that, make sure that you’re emailing with them when you need to. In the normal course of a class, if you develop a question about some material, you can ask your professor about it in the next class—either before or after, or during class discussion. When doing remote work, you may not have these opportunities. So don’t be afraid to email your professors with questions. One important thing to ask is whether they plan on keeping office hours. Some professors may be running virtual office hours over video calls. Office hours are a great way to get some feedback and discuss class materials, so if your professor is still holding them in some way, this would be the optimal time to use them. You may even find that you get more one-on-one time with your professors while classes are “cancelled”.

It’s up to you, as a student, to take responsibility for your education into your own hands. Attend your remote classes, turn in your assignments, keep up your regular study schedule, and wash your hands regularly—and hopefully, everything will return to normal one day soon. Hang in there!