



**5**  
**TIPS**  
*for successful*  
**ONLINE  
LEARNING**



LONE STAR  
COLLEGE  
ONLINE

# 1

## Avoid debt

*Online learning is becoming more commonplace, even necessary for many students with busy schedules. Even though online courses require just as much work, check out these tips for successful online learning.*

Trying to get the most bang for your buck is a smart decision. Online learning can be more affordable than on-site courses, saving time and money by avoiding a commute, or by accessing free learning materials online.

When searching for the right school, be sure to consider online programs offered at community colleges, which typically cost considerably less than universities and private schools. Research shows that cost and institutional prestige do not necessarily predict course quality. Depending on the degree you are pursuing, you should be able to take most of your core classes online at your local community college and you may even be able to get a fully online degree or certificate.

### *Financial Aid*

*If you attend an accredited online college or university, you may qualify for federal financial aid. Filing the FAFSA is free and relatively easy. To see if you qualify for aid, go to [fafsa.ed.gov](https://fafsa.ed.gov).*

# 2

## Set your own pace

Many students wish their professor had a rewind button. Some, a fast-forward button. In online classes, you don't have to wait for the rest of the class to catch up before progressing, and depending on your pace, studies have shown that online classes can require half the time as on-site learning.

Remember that you can work at a personalized pace but don't forget your deadlines. You may decide to go to class from your living room or study at night before you go to sleep but beware of procrastination. Your brain will naturally value immediate rewards over prospects of longer term benefits. If you stay aware of the dangers of procrastination, then you'll be better prepared to take steps to guard against it.

### *Tips for staying on task*

- ⇒ *Create a customized schedule to fit your life and class deadlines.*
- ⇒ *...study time is separate from class time, so plan ahead.*
- ⇒ *To avoid burnout or restlessness, try using a timer. For every 20 minutes of studying, give yourself a 5-minute break.*



Define your priorities and focus on the most important things that will help you reach your goals. Try using the Covey Time Management Matrix to help organize your efforts.

## COVEY'S TIME MANAGEMENT MATRIX

	<i>Urgent</i>	<i>Not Urgent</i>
<i>Important</i>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
<i>Not Important</i>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>



*“Don’t give up what you want most  
for what you want now.”*

—Richard G. Scott

# 3

## Develop your own learning style

Maybe you are less distracted at home, or maybe you prefer the coffee shop where household duties won't interrupt you. Watch a lecture as many times as you wish to fully understand it, at any time of the day or night. Studying online can have the advantage of feeling like one-on-one learning without the distraction of other students. You may like working in isolation but don't forget to participate in class discussions and community groups through social media. Interacting with your professor and other students will give you valuable insight to the topic you are studying.

You may also want to try to apply real world situations to the subjects you're studying. Use your imagination. If you're taking a course in accounting, try applying the principles you learn to a business you might like to start or to your current or future personal budget. If things start to feel overwhelming, focus on small steps and tasks. The key to getting things done is to keep taking steps in the right direction. Stay in contact with your advisor if you feel overwhelmed. Advisors are here to help you succeed.

Regardless of your learning style, know your instructor's and advisor's contact hours, email address, and phone number so you can always communicate.

— REMEMBER —

*“What you put in is what you get out.”*

# 4

## Learn advanced technology

Online courses make use of programs designed to deliver content digitally, and can be accessed through tablets and smartphones. Employers also prefer employees that have a deeper knowledge of technology; not to mention, most employers use online training themselves, so being familiar with it is a plus.

If you have a smart phone, consider getting a self-motivation app. Also, consider using an online evaluation tool and look for online schools that offer success tools such as online orientations and success classes.

### *Self-motivation apps*

- ⇒ *Get things done*
- ⇒ *ToDo*
- ⇒ *Things*
- ⇒ *ToDoist*
- ⇒ *Remember the Milk*
- ⇒ *Priority Matrix*
- ⇒ *Omnifocus*



# 5

## Customize your personal space

Some students often find it easier to have classroom interaction online--in the comfort of your own home or wherever life takes you.

The number one thing to consider about your personal workspace is distractions. Consider putting your phone on another side of the room, closing irrelevant tabs in your web browser, and completely avoiding social media during your designated study and class times.

Having a designated workspace will help you stay on task. Decorate your space with inspirational quotes, photos, and bright, fun items to keep your area positive and motivational.

Organize your space with bins for functional supplies, sticky notes for quick note-taking, and corkboards or desktop backgrounds to post important reminders.

As you go through your daily activities you may want to ask yourself "Is this activity taking me closer to or further away from my goal?"





The best courses tie class material into real life scenarios to make learning easier and more practical. Choose Lone Star College for online degrees and certificates that offer the flexibility to fit your life.

*Live your life, learn online.*

**Start your application today at [LoneStar.edu/Apply](https://lonestar.edu/Apply)**