



# **A GUIDE TO MANAGING YOUR STUDIES AND TIME**

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## **What this guide is about**

This guide gives you some suggestions for ways to manage, and enjoy, your studies and your time.

We have produced this because university will, for a while, be different to what you have been used to. If you are a new student university will possibly be different to what you were expecting.

With remote study now playing a significant part in most university courses it is more important than ever that you are prepared for the autonomy of studying at Higher Education level.

This guide is based partly on information from Mind's website, partly on experience of working with students, and partly on a guide produced for autistic students on coping during the changes of 2020 produced by The Network of Autism Practitioners in Higher Education.





# Your work space

We all need somewhere that we can be productive to do our work.

- Identify a comfortable space for your university work. As far as you can, keep it separate from your free time/relaxation space
- Make sure the space is as ergonomically safe as you are able to make it
- Keep everything you need for study in your work space (stationery, books etc)
- Add items that improve atmosphere and therefore may improve wellbeing and productivity, such as plants, pictures and lamps
- Take regular breaks from the screen
- Take regular movement breaks
- Use headphones to listen to sounds that help you to concentrate, or noise cancelling headphones to block out noise
- Communicate with other household members about when you, and they, will be working





## Creating Routine

Having structure and routine can help you to feel in control of your studies and to separate them from other things in your life. How much routine we need will vary from person to person.

- Make a timetable. Include study and other activities; lectures, reading, making notes, rest, exercise, chores, commitments, hobbies
- Make a visual copy and put it in your work space; use colour-coding/symbols
- If possible try to go to bed, wake up and eat at regular times each day
- If you share your home with others you could suggest a household routine (for example 'cleaning on Wednesday evenings', 'eat together on Thursdays')

Sometimes being flexible with our routine can help our wellbeing and productivity; it's ok to change our plans.



# Managing your study time

- There are lots of apps that can help with time management. There is a [list of these apps](#) on our web page for autistic students. Whilst this page is aimed at autistic students these apps are useful for many people.
- The '[pomodoro](#)' (timer) technique is popular:
  - Choose a task to be accomplished
  - Set a timer to 25 minutes
  - Work on the task until the timer rings
  - Put a tick on a piece of paper
  - Take a short break (5 minutes is fine)
  - Every 4 pomodoros take a longer break (15-30 minutes)
- There is [advice from SHU's Skills Centre here](#). This includes help with prioritising through deciding which tasks are [important/not important](#) and which are [urgent/not urgent](#).



# Socialising

How we want to socialise varies from person to person. Some people are happiest in, and gain energy from, their own company and like to socialise with a few people they are close to. Others are happiest with, and gain energy from, being in groups and talking to lots of different people. Some are happiest when they have elements of both.

How we prefer to socialise often comes from where we are on the introversion/extroversion spectrum.

Social interaction that is enjoyable to you can make you feel good and study more effectively, but don't feel you have to do it when you don't want to.

- Think about what kind of socialising you enjoy; a little, a lot, one to one, in a small group, in a big group, about a topic, about thoughts and feelings, about 'light' subjects, about 'heavy' subjects, it depends on your mood ...
- Try to incorporate the types of socialising that you enjoy into your routine. This might mean regular phone calls with relatives/close friends, meeting up with friends in a group, maintaining contact with individuals or groups using social media, or joining a Students' Union Society.





## Free time

As with socialising, how each of us choose to spend our free time varies greatly. It is important that you put time aside time for any hobbies or interests that you have, and time for relaxation. Incorporate these things into your routine.

- Build physical activity into your routine, if possible. There are options for most ages and abilities. This includes things you can do at home, as well as outdoor activities
- Spend time in green space if you can or bring nature into your everyday life. This can benefit both your mental and physical wellbeing. For example growing food or flowers, exercising outdoors, or being with animals can have lots of positive impacts
- If you are not sure how you would like to spend your free time, or you want to develop new hobbies and interests, there is a lot of inspiration on the internet. You could also browse the Students' Union Societies to see if there are any that you would like to join.





## Further Information/Web Links

The Inclusive Support team within Student Wellbeing offers practical support for many of the areas covered in this guide, and some other areas. This support is for students who have mental health difficulties, autism, attention deficit (hyperactivity) disorder, or if they are a care leaver, a carer, or are estranged from their family:

### [Inclusive Support at SHU Web Page](#)

Student Wellbeing provides information and advice to support your psychological wellbeing in order for you to manage your studies and make the most of university life:

### [Student Wellbeing at SHU Web Page](#)

