

Tips for Students: Learning and Thriving in Quarantine

The sudden shift of your face-to-face and hybrid courses to a fully online learning environment was accompanied by many uncertainties about courses, housing, work, campus events, social activities, and life in general. Each day brings waves of changes and new information – from Ferris and, most likely, in your personal and professional lives. These waves of change may feel almost physical, as if you’re swimming in Lake Michigan, getting tossed around, waiting for the next wave to hit you, and looking for a lifeline.

The waves have turned life upside down. Being in quarantine is tough. You may feel a range of emotions: a sense of loss, boredom or restlessness, anxiety, stress from a lack of structure, sadness from missing your friends. All of this can make it hard to focus on your courses.

To cope, dig into your inner strengths. Renew your focus on your hopes and take concrete steps to move forward toward your goals. In fact, the word “wave” can provide some guidance for doing this. Below, we use the word “wave” to provide some specific strategies for your health and success. We also want to know what’s working for you. Let us know!

WAVE: Well-being, Academics, Values, Engagement (the TL;DR Version)



Needpix.com, Waves Waves Graffiti, free photo

W: Well-being. Examine and take care of your physical, emotional, social, financial, and academic needs.

A: Academics. Have a space and schedule for learning, use good study skills, and get support when you need it.

V: Values. Focus on your values and goals, and act with integrity and kindness.

E: Engagement. Be intentional about engaging in your courses and daily life and connecting with others and your community.

Want more tips? Keep reading!

Well-being. First, think about your well-being, including your physical, emotional, social, financial, and academic needs. What strengths or resources do you have – personally, among your relationships, or in your community? What aspects of your well-being might need a little more care? Who or what might help you maintain or improve your well-being? In addition to answering these questions, try the following strategies:

- Follow the guidelines from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention and [Governor Whitmer](#) about staying at home and seeking health care when needed. (This one is a must-do!)
- Maintain a daily routine: [Get enough sleep](#), eat healthy foods, [do something physical](#), connect with friends or family, and take time to disconnect from digital/online interactions.

- Take a few minutes each day to slow down and tune in to your feelings, thoughts, and the physical sensations in your body. Just noticing and naming how and what you feel and think can reduce feelings of stress and worry.
- Recognize it's normal to feel worried or anxious. If those feelings start to feel overwhelming, reach out for support. [Birkam Health Center](#) has resources available.

Academics. Think space, schedule, study strategies, and support. The following strategies can help you stay academically afloat:

- Try to **create a space** dedicated to your schoolwork. Do what you can to make this space somewhere you enjoy being. For instance, give yourself a comfortable place to sit, some background music, a view of the outside, or a favorite mug for coffee, tea, or water.
- At the start of each week, create a schedule and structure for yourself:
 - **Go through each of your classes, identify what needs to be done and the due dates, and make a schedule.** Be specific - don't just say that on Monday morning, you'll do your Psych class. Get more detailed:
 - 10:00-12:00: Read the assigned readings for Psych and write a summary in your own words.
 - 12:00-1:00: Eat lunch.
 - 1:00-3:00: Do your Math problem set.
 - 3:00-3:30: Facetime with your friend.
 - 3:30-4:00: Video conference to work on your group project for English.
 - **Test out the tech tools you'll need to use.** If you need help getting or using a tech tool, contact the [Information Technology Solution Center](#) (ITSC) at (231) 591-4822 or (877) 779-4822. If you need internet services, [Comcast](#) and [Charter/Spectrum](#) are among the companies offering free services, or check out this great [list of hotspots and resources](#) developed by eLearning (the hotspots you can access while sitting in your parked car may be most helpful).
- **Try new study strategies.** Even if you have good study habits, check out this great [science-based resource](#) from Indiana University, and [this one](#) developed just for these times from the University of Michigan, which includes some tips for making the most of video lectures.
- If you could use a little help in your courses (and we all can, at some point), **reach out for support!** In addition to contacting your professors, the following services might be helpful:
 - Your academic advisor, or you can [email for general advising help](#),
 - [Virtual tutoring](#),
 - [The Writing Center](#),
 - [Educational Counseling and Disabilities Services](#), and
 - [The Kurzweil text-to-speech conversion platform](#).
- Use the different channels available (for instance, Canvas/Blackboard, email, social media, phone/video calls) to share your questions, successes, and challenges with your professors and classmates.

Values. Values can ground us when the going gets tough. Reflect on your values and what it means to be a Bulldog, and how you can continue to practice those values. For instance:

- Identify one or two ways your courses are helping you move towards your academic, professional, or personal goals. When things feel tough, remind yourself of your goals and the supports available to you.
- Continue to act with integrity and respect for yourself, your professors and classmates, your loved ones, and your community.
- Be kind to yourself and others. Try to maintain the perspective that you and everyone else are doing their best while facing a lot of uncertainty and change.

Engagement. Be intentional about your courses and daily life and stay connected with others (while following the “stay home” guidelines). In addition to keeping in touch with your professors and classmates:

- Actively engage in your coursework. Ask yourself questions about what you’re learning and find the answers to those questions.
- Try challenging yourself to “[eat your frog](#)” – to do a task you’ve been putting off.
- Check out this great list of opportunities to do [virtual volunteer work](#), created by FSU’s Center for Leadership, Activities, and Career Services.
- Assess how well you’re sticking to your daily routine and consider changes you can make.

Everyone is facing challenges and different emotions right now. We hope riding the WAVEs will help you succeed. If you have advice or tips you’d like to share, please email us at fctl@ferris.edu (put “Advice for students” in the subject line). You’ve got this, and we’re cheering you on.

*-Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning, with special assistance from Student Assistants Damon Auchmuty and Scott Rogers
Ferris State University, March 2020*