

Remote Productivity

Two helpful moves you can make to increase productivity in remote work scenarios is to take time to develop a system that works for you and committing to regularly reevaluating and improving the system. Working from home is often a big change, but continually looking for opportunities to make small changes to increase productivity will help you adjust your old habits to your new parameters. Small changes over a period of time create big changes. Trying to make too many changes too quickly is often overwhelming and counterproductive. Set yourself up to succeed by learning about what's working for you and what isn't, reflecting, and improving gradually.

I. Create & Improve your System

A. Schedule

1. **Treat study and writing time as you would a job.** From home, you will have to put time aside and coordinate that with people in your life. You may have to enforce this.
2. **Create routine.** Assess when you work best against what time you have available. Determine weekly times to do all your activities, prioritized by difficulty and deadlines. Set yourself up for success by scheduling your most difficult tasks at the times you are usually most productive.
3. **Utilize writing groups** to help put time aside, create routine, and connect with peers.
4. **Establish a single place to put your schedule** to keep things easy.
5. **Put time aside every week to work on the schedule for the following week.** Take some time to save yourself time. In whatever detail works best for you, plan out your future week(s). If this doesn't work for you one week, experiment with a different level of detail for the next week.

B. Your Pomodoro Technique

1. The Pomodoro Technique was developed to increase productivity and avoid burnout. It is designed to **focus all of your attention on the task at hand for a period of time** while also incorporating breaks. The traditional length is **25 minutes on, about 5-10 minutes off**.
2. For studying and writing, 25 minutes is often too short. Here is a website with an **adjustable timer**. It is great for online writing groups or personal use. **Experiment with your focus levels and adjust.** Remember to incorporate breaks and challenge yourself to slowly improve! Small, gradual improvements create huge changes over time! <https://www.marinaratimer.com/>

C. Activity Tracking & Continual Improvement

1. **Learning how you are spending your time can be the first step** in changing what you're doing. Over the course of a week, keep track of what you actually do compared to what you planned. At the end of the week, evaluate the results and make changes to improve your system. Again, small changes make a huge difference over time, far more than trying to take on huge changes that are too hard to maintain!
2. **Apps** like Productive, Flora, and Productivity facilitate (while also allowing you to set goals).

D. Writing Plans

1. **Reverse outline from your due date.** Break the paper into chunks, and then those chunks into **tasks**. When you sit down to write, have tasks you would like to accomplish. When you design your system, focus on how you can improve getting those types of tasks done—productivity in studying or writing blocks of 1-2 hours.
2. Here is a **helpful, tailorable planner online**. Select the word count and various temporal parameters, and it will create a plan for you that tells you how much you need to accomplish by when. <https://www.pacemaker.press/>

II. Workspace

A. Physical Workspace

1. In making reading, writing, and studying a routine, try and **establish a workplace** at home. Somewhere you routinize as part of the work. Somewhere you associate with getting into that mindset and concentrating.
2. If you live with others, let them know that this is your workspace (if possible), and that when you are there, you **shouldn't be interrupted** unless absolutely necessary, etc.

B. Virtual Workspace

1. **Use reference software** to keep your sources organized. You can create folders for different topics or classes and even store notes.
2. The library has download links and lots of information on **Zotero** (<https://library.claremont.edu/zotero/>).