



# 7 STEPS TO MAXIMISE PRODUCTIVITY WHILE LEARNING FROM HOME

MICHAEL SPENCER, HEAD OF ACADEMY, AKA MAPUTO

Many educational institutions have transitioned from in-person to online learning, which requires students to adapt to a new learning environment. Michael Spencer, Head of Academy at the Aga Khan Academy Maputo, has stated that it is interesting and challenging to navigate through the current pandemic and its implications. Michael has prior experience in tackling such a situation. He served as a senior staff member during the SARS outbreak in Hong Kong in 2003 which reached about 25 countries, affected around 8000 people and claimed about 800 lives.

“COVID-19 has re-ignited those same feelings and brought me back memories of that difficult time. It was, perhaps, therefore, easier to anticipate the challenges that the Academy, along with other schools, would face” he shared.

He explained, “While the primary priority was maintaining the safety and wellbeing of the Academy community, an equally important priority now has been ensuring that teaching and learning continue. Although an online learning platform has been put in place and students across age ranges are accessing their learning online daily, there are always a few measures that can be taken to make the transition easier.”

Whether it is creating a special space for learning, or making an effort to stay in touch with loved ones, there are many strategies that can help ease the transition to learning from home, while also maintaining focus and productivity. Here are seven measures to help maximise productivity while learning from home.

## 1. Go to sleep and wake up at the same time as you usually do

Even though you are learning from home, it's important to structure your day as you normally would on a standard school day. Keeping your normal sleep schedule will help you maintain normalcy and prevent you from being too tired during the day.

## 2. Set a clear timetable for what you plan to do

Organising your day into concrete tasks that you want to accomplish will help keep you focused and on-track. Be sure to also schedule in regular breaks, ideally at the same time that you would typically take a break at school. This will help your mind to concentrate throughout the day.

## 3. Create a learning space at home

Choosing a dedicated spot in your home from which you will work can also help you maintain focus. If possible, try to avoid working from your couch, bed, or anywhere else normally associated with resting. The learning space should be free of clutter, so as to put you in a “work-mode” mindset.

## 4. Set self-imposed deadlines

Especially for more open-ended projects, setting yourself a deadline will keep you more focused and productive as you watch the clock. When you've met a deadline, celebrate your success and treat yourself to a reward.

## 5. Practice physical activity

With no classrooms to walk to, sports games to play, or gyms to exercise in, it can be easy to neglect your health when spending all day at home. Making an effort to exercise during your breaks and maintaining a healthy diet is important for both your physical and mental health. Whether it is through doing some push-ups between assignments or walking around the house after every hour, make sure to keep your body agile throughout the day

## 6. Maintain a healthy diet

Replace unhealthy snacks with healthier options, there are many easy ways to ensure you can keep healthy while working from home. Try to cut up fruits or have a box of nuts at the ready for when your energy levels are low.

## 7. Try to avoid distractions

From interruptions to notifications, studying from home can make it difficult to stay focused. When choosing where to work, try to find a spot where you will have the least noise and distractions. To avoid procrastination, some students download a website blocker that temporarily blocks social media sites while they are working. You may also want to turn off notifications on your computer and put your phone away (ideally out of sight) while doing your schoolwork.

These were just a few tips and tricks that will help you stay focused and while adapting to a new learning environment. While we do have a number of tasks to complete while at home, we must also remember to keep connected to friends and family during these tough times and take some time off to disconnect from screens.

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