Looking after your wellbeing online

We are spending more and more time online so it is inevitable that a lot of your day will be spent looking at a screen. Being online is essential for staying connected and completing your course, but it is also essential to look after your wellbeing whilst online and find balance in each day.

Taking care of yourself is important and this workbook is a practical resource that you can use to manage your online activity and wellbeing together. Take some time to complete the activities and notice how you feel each day. Let's start by tracking our screen time...

Screen time tracker

Screen time is essential, but it's useful to track how much time is spent online to understand our digital activity and identify any links with how we're feeling. Screen time activities include entertainment, emails, studying, video conferencing, gaming, streaming music, social media and anything else that involves digital technology. Enter your predicted hours and then complete the table below each day to discover the actual hours spent online in a week.

Predicted hours spent: _____ **Actual hours spent:** _____

Hours spent:	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
Morning							
Midday							
Evening							
Total							

Screen time tracker review

What patterns did you notice between the amount of time spent online and how you felt at the end of each day?

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You may have found that you were more tired after a day of increased online activity. Research has shown that it's easier to establish an emotional connection face to face than it is online, so spending prolonged periods online may lead us to feel drained or fatigued, and even disconnected. Zoom fatigue is a real thing! To alleviate this you could:

1. Use non-tech methods: keep a track of notes and deadlines via other methods such as post-it notes, notepads, diaries, or calendars.

2. Turn off notifications: it's normal to feel a pressure to reply to things instantly. It can be useful whilst you're studying to turn off notifications that can feel overwhelming and tiring.

3. Create a phone free zone: identify times during the day where you won't look at your phone. This could be at meal times with flatmates or relatives to allow more space for connection.

Online studying

Online studying has become a standard part of all courses. If you're struggling with online studying, remember that you're not alone and there is always extra support that you can access. Motivation and focus can be difficult, particularly if you're living with friends. To make your online studying smoother, it may be useful to answer the following questions:

What will be helpful for you to stay mentally healthy whilst studying at home?

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What has worked (or hasn't worked) in the past?

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What support might you need whilst studying at home?

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Online studying tips

You may have started to identify what works for you when studying at home. Everyone has their own approach, but we think these tips can go a long way in creating a healthy balance.

Create a workspace

Allocate a space in your room, house or flat for studying. Designating a specific space will help to keep a good work-life balance and allow you to switch off at the end of the day.

Plan your week

Tasks and deadlines can feel overwhelming, but planning your week will help you to manage your time more effectively. Factor in enjoyable activities as well as academic work.

Minimise distractions

Studying at home can feel distracting and you may find yourself procrastinating. Setting small goals and working in short bursts can help with focus.

Take regular breaks

Regular breaks away from your screen are essential. Looking at screens for prolonged periods can make your eyes feel tired or dry. Breaks can be used for wellbeing activities.

Wellbeing activities

Use your breaks for Six Ways to Wellbeing activities and build them into every day.

connect — Connecting with others is so important. Use video calling rather than audio so that you can see people's faces.

give — Do something nice for a flatmate or relative . You could cook them a nice meal or write them a letter of appreciation.

take notice — Be observant and try to savour the moment. Enjoy the time that you have and allow yourself to relax when you're away from screens.

be active — Exercising makes you feel good so it's important to include this into your day. Going for a brisk walk or even doing housework is being active.

be healthy — Getting plenty of sleep, drinking enough water and having a balanced diet will help you to feel good and balance out the impact of increased screen time.

learn and discover — Factor in time to follow an interest separate from your studies. It may be something you've always been interested in and it can be helpful if this is away from your screen.

Today's plan

Today's planner:

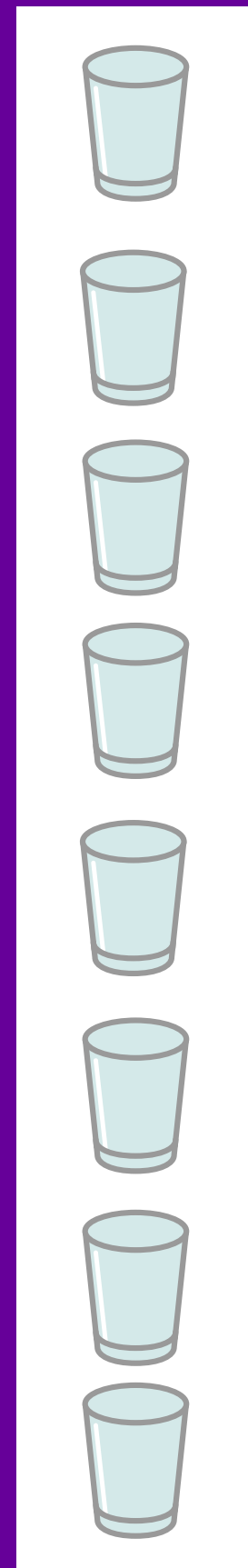| Time	
9am	
10am	
11am	
12pm	
1pm	
2pm	
3pm	
4pm	
5pm	
6pm	
7pm	
8pm	

Today's breaks:

Connect

Give

Take Notice

Be Active

Be Healthy

Learn and Discover

To do:

Water tracker:

Accessing further support

Being present when spending time online and using devices actively rather than passively can help to regain autonomy. Spending time online can improve our wellbeing as it allows us to stay connected to others and keep learning new things.

However, if you are finding the increased time online challenging and need further support, there is always help available. For help with motivation and focus head to the student support website and access workshops from My Learning Essentials on topics including procrastination. If you need support with online learning don't be afraid to ask your tutors for extra resources and help if you are unsure of anything. Your Academic Advisor could also help you.