



Studying with Distractions: Partners, kids, family and pets

While we all love our loved ones, it can be challenging to stay on track while studying from home. Here are a few tips to help you get your studying done and spend some quality time with those you love!

1. Set up your study space so you have a designated place to do your work.
2. Create a life/work/study schedule and stick to it. Keep the same sleep schedule and follow through with your personal hygiene habits.
3. If you have small children at home and you read suggestion #2 you probably laughed out loud! So here are some considerations:
 - a. Accept the fact that the old rules no longer apply! You will have to adapt.
 - b. You will have to plan study sessions in shorter blocks such as 15 minutes for very small children, 30 minutes for older children, and if you are lucky, 60 minutes for teenagers!
 - c. For small and older children, create a box/list of cool things to play with that can only be accessed when you are studying. These things must be safe for them to use/do when you are not watching every minute! Ideas may include age-appropriate puzzles, coloring, watching TV, playing a video game, making a craft, playing a game, building blocks, Duplo's or Legos, playing with soft puppets, and eating a healthy snack. While it is not considered cool by kids, you might also include a few chores that have to be done that are rewarded with play time.
 - d. Accept the fact that the old rules no longer apply! You must be flexible and creative!
 - e. Between each study session, plan time to interact with your kids. Go outside, play tag, do a puzzle or game, outline their shapes with chalk on the driveway, play with playdough, eat lunch together, read a book, or perhaps bake cookies.
 - f. Use a headset when listening to an online lecture or are engaged in online discussions. This way it's not so obvious you are "on the phone" which is the universal signal for kids to interrupt their parents! Caution – do not use headphones when you need to supervise young children!
 - g. Did I mention you must accept the fact that the old rules no longer apply? But recognize you are getting back time with your kids that at the beginning of the semester you lamented not having!
 - h. Consider setting up a quiet play area in your office space to keep an eye on little ones. Close the door or use a baby gate to keep them in your

room. Place a vinyl tablecloth or old sheet on the floor, then set up the playdough station with each child using a cookie sheet to define their play space (and the mess). Put away the activity before getting out the next one. Remember, you are only buying yourself 15-minute time blocks to work in while they are engaged.

- i. Use nap time wisely! Make sure you have planned out your study schedule at the beginning of the day so when the lights go out for the little ones you can shift into efficient gear and focus immediately on what needs to be done.
 - j. Use babysitters when possible. For right now that might mean paying an older sibling to help you out or asking your partner to keep the kids engaged.
4. Remember, successful students often study in short increments but more frequently throughout the day. So, use your 15-minute time blocks to self-quiz. Break-up your reading into smaller segments while taking notes Cornell style for easy self-quizzing later. Create a concept map to summarize what you have learned over a couple study sessions. Keep at it and you may just surprise yourself how much you can get done throughout the day.
 5. Planning is everything. Delegation is helpful so ask everyone in the family to pitch in.
 6. Engage in daily self-care activities such as exercise, healthy eating, getting 8 hours of sleep, stay hydrated, and practice stress-reduction activities.
 7. When you plan time with your family be sure to be fully present and enjoy your time together.

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