Tips for Success in Online Courses:
10 Ways to Be a Successful Online Student*

1. **Start the semester right.** The first week of an online class can set the tone for the rest of the semester. Use these first days wisely – see the other side for [What to do During Your First Week in an Online Class](http://distancelearn.about.com/od/distancelearning101/tp/Online-Student-Success.htm).

2. **Embrace the syllabus.** Print a copy, but don’t just file it away – check it early and often!

3. **Become a master of online tools.** Become familiar with using multimedia technology and the course tools – click around the course room! Google’s tools can be an amazing resource for your studies. Improve your research skills by mastering Google Search, Google Scholar, Google Books, and other popular resources.

4. **Create a dedicated place for your studies.** Whether you have an entire office or just a desk in your living room, make sure it’s organized with the supplies you need and is available for use at any time.

5. **Achieve family / school balance.** When learning at home, it’s often difficult to balance the load. Anticipate scheduling problems and come up with a solution that works for everyone. If you’re going on vacation or have a meeting out of town, work ahead.

6. **Play off your strengths.** Note reviews can be uninspiring. Personalizing your study time should make it more enjoyable and more productive – find out what your learning style is and use it to excel by taking the READI survey at [http://csmd.readi.info](http://csmd.readi.info).

7. **Become a respected discussion participant.** Online class chat and discussion rooms can be the best place to make connections, share your insights, and stand out in the crowd. Learn how to communicate and take these venues seriously. Need some writing tips? Check [http://webct.umn.edu/students/tips/tips_6.shtml](http://webct.umn.edu/students/tips/tips_6.shtml).

8. **Stay on schedule.** You cannot afford to get behind in an online class. Know the deadlines and meet them!

9. **Know how to ask for help.** It is important to build a relationship and ask for help when necessary. Learn how to communicate effectively with your instructor(s) and avoid the misunderstandings that can arise with electronic discussion.

10. **Stay motivated.** Online learning is an endurance sport. When you’re feeling burned out and tired of staring at a screen, don’t slack. Remember that everyone has good days and bad. The key to online class success: never give up.

**Technical Trouble?** Contact the Help desk at [http://www.csmd.edu/HelpDesk/](http://www.csmd.edu/HelpDesk/) or 301-934-7740.
Don’t understand the course material or what you are supposed to be working on? Ask your instructor using the contact method listed in the syllabus!

*Modified from: [http://distancelearn.about.com/od/distancelearning101/tp/Online-Student-Success.htm](http://distancelearn.about.com/od/distancelearning101/tp/Online-Student-Success.htm)
Tips for Success in Online Courses:
What to do in Your First Week of an Online Class**

1. **Determine if you're in over your head.** Don't blemish your record with an "F" or a "WD." Readiness for Education at a Distance Indicator (READI) is a tool which helps you determine your level of readiness for taking online courses. We encourage you to complete the READI survey at [http://csmd.readi.info](http://csmd.readi.info)
Login information is: user id: csmd password: student

2. **Buy any required materials early.** If your online course requires textbooks or other materials, buy them BEFORE class starts so you won't fall behind on your assignments. You can even buy them online at: [http://www.csmcollegestore.com/csmd/main/splash.htm](http://www.csmcollegestore.com/csmd/main/splash.htm)

3. **Check your computer.** Take time now to check your computer browser at: [http://webct.csmd.edu/webct/urw/lc9140001.tp0/browserchecker.dowebct?](http://webct.csmd.edu/webct/urw/lc9140001.tp0/browserchecker.dowebct?) Check the course syllabus for software or hardware you will need. You may need to install programs in order to access some course components. You can find many free downloads at: [http://www.dlf.csmd.edu/gettingstarted/bbInfo.html](http://www.dlf.csmd.edu/gettingstarted/bbInfo.html).

4. **Introduce yourself to the instructor.** Your instructor may never get to know you unless you take the initiative. Most courses include an area to introduce yourself to the class. If not, then you might consider introducing yourself to the instructor in an email.

5. **Participate.** Sometimes it's difficult to jump in and participate in online class discussions. But, don't hesitate - you'll end up with a better grasp of the material.

6. **Look for study partners.** Other students can help you study, answer your questions, and remind you of any upcoming deadlines. And sometimes, it's nice to just chat with someone who knows exactly what you're going through.

7. **Acquaint yourself with the class structure.** Each online course has its own structure. Click around - make sure you can access all of the necessary online class components.

8. **Record tests and assignments on your calendar.** Don't expect your online class professor to give you regular reminders. As soon as you receive a syllabus, record all of the assignments, tests, essays, and projects on your personal calendar.

9. **Establish a regular study time.** Set a regular time to study, and stick to it! For more hints, visit: [http://distancelearn.about.com/od/managingyourwork/a/familyandschool.htm](http://distancelearn.about.com/od/managingyourwork/a/familyandschool.htm)

10. **Get a head start on the assigned work.** Don't expect the instructor to be available 24/7. Sending an 11:57 PM e-mail about an exam that closes at midnight is not a successful strategy. You can prevent this by jumpstarting your online course - begin upcoming assignments and papers during your first week.

**Modified from: [http://distancelearn.about.com/od/distancelearning101/a/FirstWeek.htm](http://distancelearn.about.com/od/distancelearning101/a/FirstWeek.htm)