



Dear CCNY Community,

This week we present:

Letters to Home - Creating Routines and Structure

Shelter-in-place has resulted in significant changes in our daily routines and work-life balance. This disruption can have implications for our motivation, concentration, productivity, and overall mental health. Finding creative ways to establish new routines and structures during times of uncertainty can help us cope and feel grounded. Below are some tips for creating routines and structure at home.

- **Set a Morning and Nighttime Routine:** Creating set morning routines, including a fixed wake-up hour, showering, eating breakfast, and meditating can be helpful in starting the day on the right foot. At nighttime, it is important to keep a consistent sleep schedule. Setting up routines, such as minimizing screen time prior to bed, can help ensure your body prepares to quiet down and rest.
- **Create a Schedule:** Loosely planning out your day can be helpful in keeping you focused on the goals you wish to accomplish. In addition, write down and track your goals via pen and paper or on a phone application and include big due dates and commitments throughout the week. It can be easy to lose track of the days, but updating your schedule can keep you on track while safe at home.
- **Write out a To-Do List:** To-do lists can help organize tasks and prioritize between work, school, family, and house responsibilities. Recording your tasks can help you remember what you have left to complete. Be creative and celebrate crossing tasks off your list!
- **Get Dressed for Work:** While this tip is straight forward, don't underestimate the power of getting dressed to start your day. Ditch the pajamas and sweats and put on fresh clothes each morning to help boost your energy and motivation.
- **Make Time for Breaks and Rest:** Yes, schedule that down time! That can look like taking a nap, making time to work out, read, try out a new recipe, or connect with friends. Intentionally making time for breaks from work and school will help reset your focus and reward your hard work.

- **Designate Spaces for Work and Play:** Finding separate spaces for work and leisure in your home, while living in the city, can be difficult. Feel free to get creative while ensuring some change in your environment. Avoid doing work in bed to reserve that space for rest. This will help make it easier to disconnect when the workday or school day is over.
- **Consistency and Flexibility:** Building routines and schedules means creating consistency. Define your schedule and stick to it. During these uncertain times, having a routine we can control is important for emotion regulation. At the same time, it is important to remain flexible and adjust when needed. Your schedule may look different from day to day or week to week. Be consistent by checking in and re-evaluating what works best for you.
- **Accountability:** Friends and family can help you stay committed to your routine and schedule. Involve your family in your schedule. Let friends know about your goals, ask them about theirs, and check-in with each other regarding progress. Consider joining virtual study groups. Working together to maintain focus will make the job easier and can possibly be fun.

Additional resources:

[Sample Morning Routine](#)

[To Do Tracking Application](#)

[App to help stay organized](#)

[NPR Podcast - How Habits Shape](#)

For immediate mental health support please call NYC Well 1-888-NYC-WELL (888-692-9355). NYC Well provides free, confidential services to support mental health concerns. NYC WELL is available 24/7 and can provide assistance in over 200 languages.

You can also text WELL to 65173 or access the NYC WELL website at <https://nycwell.cityofnewyork.us/en/> to chat with a counselor.

Stay safe and take care of each other.
The Counseling Center