

ASCENDTALKS:

STUDY TIPS & PRODUCTIVITY

Monthly Inspiration:

"Your work is going to fill a large part of your life, and the only way to be truly satisfied is to do what you believe is great work. And the only way to do great work is to love what you do. If you haven't found it yet, keep looking. Don't settle. As with all matters of the heart, you'll know when you find it." - Steve Jobs

Useful Study Tips & Productivity Hacks to Make the Best Out of Exam Season

- [Momentum](#) is an organizational Chrome extension that replaces the new tab page with a personal dashboard featuring to-do lists, weather, and inspiration. Get inspired with a daily photo and quote, set a daily focus, and track your to-dos. Eliminate distractions and beat procrastination with a reminder of your focus for the day on every new tab.
- Create a designated workspace made for studying. Separating the workspace from the space you use to relax and unwind helps the mind stay focused when working. Check out this great [article](#) to optimize your workspace!
- Long hours don't necessarily mean productivity, so know when to take a break. According to a [2014 Stanford University study](#), people who put in about 50 hours per week of work, get the same amount of work done as someone working 70 hours. Be sure to take breaks to maximize productivity.
- [Monday.com](#) is a great resource for tracking all your coursework, unanticipated deadlines and just student life in general. A university email address enables you to sign up for their student account which has no attached costs. With endless notifications and email reminders, this tool makes it extremely difficult to miss an assignment.
- When studying, stay away from distracting websites and notifications from your phone. Try using the chrome extension [Self Control](#), which blocks social media from your computer or [Productivity Owl](#) which swoops an owl across your page if you're not being productive.



iAscend Member Spotlight

Brandon Yu - 2nd Year Life Sciences Student at University of Toronto

In the recent articles written on your weekly bulletin, "The One Percent," you talk about how productivity that is inspired from a purpose will always turn out to be more efficient . It has now been over a year of online school and many times, students find themselves studying for the sole purpose of getting good grades, causing them to lose motivation to learn. What would you suggest for a student trying to be successful in school but also trying to gain the most knowledge and truly interact with their education?

For students looking to maximize their time within school, I would really suggest two things: Network, put yourselves out there, and don't be afraid to pursue opportunities. Learning throughout a course is definitely great, but through my experiences, I have always gotten more out of connecting with other people and by doing projects that I am genuinely passionate about – usually outside of school. In order to do this, however, you really have to do some introspection and time management. Ask yourself these questions: What am I passionate about doing? What problems am I trying to solve? How does my current schedule reflect my true interests, and how can I make time for what matters to me? It is definitely possible to pursue extracurriculars while still focusing on school, but there are tradeoffs. Finding ways to optimize your schedule and your systems will make that a lot easier. That will help you make time to do the things you have to do (such as school) and things that you are passionate about.

Time management is very critical to the university experience. Students get the chance to understand how time is a commodity and is impossible to replace. Considering how time can escape us during endless lectures, is studying less but studying smarter an avenue worth exploring?

Absolutely. From my experience within university, time is definitely the limiting factor, and anything that you can do to essentially make more time will be super valuable to you and everything that you are participating in. I speak about this within my [YouTube channel](#) but my two biggest tips regarding this aspect would be to (i) be self-aware of your tendencies, highs and lows, and environments, and (ii) optimize towards maximum efficiency, usually through experimentation and trying various systems.



Working and studying from the comfort of one's home has become habitual and we have adapted to a "new normal". As the end of the pandemic is seeming to be more and more hopeful, many first-years have a relentless fear about how school will be like when things are back to normal. As a student who experienced both the online world and in-person teaching, what are some things you would do to adapt to life after the pandemic?

In retrospect, the virtual learning environment has been quite good to me. I have been able to use the time that I would spend commuting to campus on all of my other passion projects, connecting with various people, and of course spending a little bit more time on school. However, it has been a year of online school and I am excited to get back to in-person learning. Adapting back to those circumstances would mean that I would have to reconsider the workload that I am currently taking on, and reprioritize the various aspects of my life that have been shuffled around due to the pandemic. It really all comes down to aligning my priorities and figuring out what's most important to me at this current time.

Thanks for writing in Brandon.

Do you have any parting words for our readers?

I would be happy to help in any way that I can. The best way to reach me is by email (brandonoliveryu@gmail.com). You can also find me on [Twitter](#) / [Instagram](#). Check out my [website](#), my [YouTube channel](#), and my [weekly newsletter](#), called "The One Percent" if you would like to keep up with me!



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