



Outside the Classroom Pandemic Lessons for Students

Text by Maddie Hession • Photo by Tyler Callahan



With this complete change of pace, it's become mandatory for each of us to transform old ways into new. This global pandemic has us saying goodbye to past routines and hello to more effective ways to get the job done. So which pandemic lessons are we really learning?

What does this all look like going forward? Have any anxious or depressing feelings been brought to the surface? Will you rush back to the gym? How will you budget to prepare for September? Let's dive into some of the pandemic lessons we are collectively learning during COVID-19 about taking control of this new way of life in the future.

Mental Health

Understandably, this abrupt isolation and social distancing, resulting in a loss of freedoms and familiar social support networks, has resulted in anxiety amongst students across the country. Your focus right now should be understanding what you can control and allowing yourself to release the rest. Our minds and bodies are currently going through a moment of extreme change. Remember that everyone else is going through this exact same thing and it's okay to let some of that pressure go.

Do you have a roof over your head? Good health and clean running water? One or two people you can chat with daily? This is the moment to lean into the little luxuries surrounding your everyday life. Instead of

focusing on all you've "lost," turn your attention to all that you have. Become what you think about and practice seeing all the beauty and good that is around you. It will shift your perspective and your life. Take time to try out a new lifestyle habit, meditation, for instance, is an amazing tool to help your mind find some space and silence for a few minutes a day where nothing else matters.

Mental Health Resources

You can begin with guided meditation here:

www.headspace.com.

If you need help now, find helplines and more resources on Mental Health here:

<https://www.theroyal.ca/>.

The Mental Health Provincial Crisis Line is available 24/7 to anyone experiencing a mental health or addiction crisis (or someone concerned about them), by calling 1-888-429-8167 (toll-free).

Kids Help Phone is available 24/7, by calling 1 (800) 668-6868 (toll-free).

Personal Hygiene

Setting yourself up with an improved hygiene routine because of the pandemic will also set you up with better habits and appreciation for cleanliness going forward. As simple as it sounds, brushing your teeth twice a day, facial washing or cleansing once or twice daily on top of showering and shaving each morning will refresh you for the day ahead.



Photo by Superkitina

Making your bed when you get up will create a space that is workable and livable. Washing your sheets and pillowcases weekly will bring a feeling of total freshness and routine. Begin to schedule these rituals into your day for the remainder of the pandemic so they become second nature to you going forward.

Self-care rituals are a luxury that students do not always give themselves time to indulge in. Caring for yourself will not only reduce your current stress levels but will undoubtedly strengthen the love you have for yourself and the space you give yourself to unwind. That's perhaps one of the best pandemic lessons we've been given the opportunity to learn. Amidst the stresses of job hunting, isolation, separation, and

financial strain, take time to take care of yourself with simple self-care rituals and personal hygiene.

And don't forget to keep washing your hands, COVID-19 or no COVID-19!

Personal Hygiene Resources

Find out more about a personal hygiene routine here:

<https://www.primermagazine.com/2011/learn/15-hygiene-habits-that-you-shouldnt-miss-in-your-daily-routine>.

Read "5 Easy Self-Care Routines You Can Do At Home" here:

<https://blog.studentlifenet.com/2020/03/27/self-care-routines-you-can-do-at-home/>.

At-Home Fitness

As many of us will not be rushing back into the germ-ridden gyms that we were once so fond of, learning to incorporate exercise at home has become much more convenient and popular. Especially since daily movement and exercises that raise your heart rate are proven to boost our immunity and decrease our chances of cardiovascular disease and heart issues.

From Boxing to Zumba to High-Intensity Interval Training to Yoga practices, many gym owners and instructors have moved their practices online during COVID-19. Just as mental health will be of the utmost importance to monitor going forward, so will your physical health.

It's your prerogative to set yourself a physical goal for your own health. Find yourself a space in your bedroom or living room that will be your dedicated exercise spot. Schedule time in your day, maybe before your morning class or when roommate will be out, so you can sweat. Three to four days of exercise a week will have your body and your mind thanking you.

At-Home Fitness Resources

Find free online workout classes here:

<https://www.shape.com/fitness/trends/free-online-workouts-coronavirus>.

Read “6 Free Home Exercises for Students” here:

<https://blog.studentlifefnetwork.com/2020/04/09/free-home-exercises-students/>.

Financial Budgeting

Taking this time to set yourself up with a proper budget will allow you to tackle life after quarantine, head-on. No one expected you to be prepared for this drastic shift. But that doesn't mean you can't be prepared going forward.

Financial stress is one of the greatest burdens most students face heading into the new school year. If that sounds like you, one helpful resource is YNAB. This \$5-per-month budgeting tool gives you a full overview of your accounts, allows you to add custom goals and expenses, and keeps you on track before you even receive a paycheck. Even just mapping out a personal budget on your own is a great first step in taking charge of your financial health.

If you're in a grind to find summer employment, it may be worth recalibrating your expectations. Consider a different position or industry. Look at volunteer opportunities or side hustles you can pursue from home. Think outside the box and pursue specific transferrable skills that can help you going forward. In terms of pandemic lessons you can learn, shifting your

mind towards pursuing opportunities is something valuable to pick up.

Financial Budgeting Resources

Start your 30-Day free YNAB trial here:

<https://www.youneedabudget.com/>.

Read “How To Navigate Student Banking” here:

<https://blog.studentlifefnetwork.com/2020/04/16/heres-how-to-navigate-student-banking-during-covid-19/>.

Read “Looking for Job Opportunities in the COVID-19 Pandemic” here:

<https://news.umanitoba.ca/job-search-during-covid-19/>.

It's hard to know what the outcome will be when the pandemic passes. Ideally, it *will* pass soon, so our only job right now is to focus on the pandemic lessons we're learning. Lessons like creating effective rituals to take forward into our new normal, and letting go of that which we cannot control.

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