Making the Grade in Online Courses

If you think online classes offer a more relaxed method of learning, think again. While they do offer the flexibility that many adult learners are looking for, they don’t offer any shortcuts when it comes to work effort. Many online students would agree that these classes are as challenging (if not more so) as traditional classes. Online students have no direct supervision, which means they need to establish their own routine to guarantee success. These tips can help you to “make the grade.”

• This may be stating the obvious, but you need unlimited access to a computer and reliable Internet service. Some classes also require students to use a webcam and headset for video chats.

• Plan ahead. Don’t wait until the last minute to get the course materials. Print out a copy of the syllabus before the class starts to get a sense of what is expected in terms of time and effort. Get a calendar to keep track of assignment due dates and use this to record your grades as you receive them. Staying organized is essential!

• Claim your space. Set aside a quiet spot where you can work.

• Make a date! Designate a specific time each day that you will devote to your class. Log on to the class webpage frequently to keep up with classmates’ postings, the instructor’s comments and any other class announcements.

• “Speak up.” It’s important to take part in online class discussions. This helps you to make connections with fellow students as well as establish yourself as a valuable member of the class.

• Know when to ask for help. If you are having technical issues or trouble with assignments speak up, sooner rather than later.

• Stay on track. This is crucial to your success in the class. If you fall behind by a few assignments, it will be very hard to catch up. Find solutions to help juggle work and family commitments while you are enrolled in the class.

According to a recent San Francisco State University study, most consumers agreed that life experiences, like a weekend getaway, made them feel happier and were a better use of their money than material goods.

Putting You on the Spot

When it comes to skin cancer, the more you know the better you can protect yourself from becoming one of the more than two million people diagnosed with the disease each year. You probably know that you need to use sunscreen with SPF 15 or higher, but we’d like to put you on the spot. Take a few minutes and go here:

http://www.aad.org/spot-skin-cancer/spot-skin-cancer-quiz

to test your skin cancer knowledge by taking the American Academy of Dermatology’s SPOT Skin Cancer quiz.
Vacation is the time when you get away from your regular routine of work and other obligations for some much-needed rest and relaxation. Making time to fit in fitness will help you to return from vacation feeling your best. Consider these simple ways to make healthy choices:

• **Plan ahead.** When making hotel reservations, find out if there is an onsite gym or if gym privileges are available at a local YMCA or health club. Take advantage of whatever the facility has to offer, whether it’s swimming laps, playing tennis or joining a fitness class.

• **No gym?** No worries! You can bring along a resistance band and jump rope and exercise right in your room. Alternate a few minutes of jumping rope with some pushups, sit-ups and squats.

• **Try something new!** Vacation is the perfect time to try a new sport like kayaking or rock climbing.

• **Make exercise part of your day.** Skip the bus tour in favor of a walking tour. Choose the stairs over the elevator. Walking on the beach is a great calorie burner; you won’t even realize you are exercising!

• **If you prefer workout videos, you can download an online class to your laptop or mobile device.** A simple search will give you many options such as PhysicalFitnet.com. Make sure the site you choose is produced by a reliable source.

• **Sure, vacation is the time to ditch your diet – but within reason.** You want to return home with souvenirs of your trip, not extra pounds! When it comes to meals and snacks, choose wisely.
  - Having healthy snacks, like nuts or fruit, on hand will help you to avoid grabbing a snack that contains a lot of empty calories like chips or ice cream.
  - It is no mystery that restaurant meal portions are usually much larger than necessary. Consider sharing a meal with someone or order an appetizer and salad instead.
  - Budget your calories. If you are splurging on a fancy dinner, eat a light lunch.
  - Consider accommodations that include a kitchen. You could eat healthy breakfasts and make some other nutritious meals.
  - Toast your time off with a healthy cocktail. Some drinks can pack a punch when it comes to calories. A 6 ounce Pina colada has about 378 calories. Healthier options include wine, light beer or simple cocktails made with low-calorie mixers such as club soda or low-calorie juices.

---

**Quote of the Month**

Patriotism is not a short and frenzied outburst of emotion but the tranquil and steady dedication of a lifetime.

*Adlai Stevenson*

---

**Healthy Oat Bran Blueberry Scones**

July is National Blueberry Month. Get some exercise by picking your own berries. These high fiber scones are a great option for a quick breakfast. Enjoy!

**Ingredients:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 1/2 cups oat bran</th>
<th>1/2 cup butter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour</td>
<td>2 Eggs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/3 cup light brown sugar, packed</td>
<td>1/3 cup plain yogurt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 teaspoons baking powder</td>
<td>1 teaspoon vanilla extract</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 teaspoon cream of tartar</td>
<td>1 1/2 cups blueberries</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Directions:**

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees; grease a baking sheet.
2. In a large bowl, mix the bran, flour, sugar, baking powder and cream of tartar together. Cut in the butter.
3. In a separate bowl, mix the eggs, yogurt and vanilla extract. Blend into the dry ingredients. Fold in the berries carefully.
4. Form into a circle on the baking sheet. Cut into wedges, wiping the knife each time.
5. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes.

Source: Blueberry-recipe.com