

# Your Guide to Studying Online





## IS ONLINE STUDY RIGHT FOR ME?

If you're considering studying online for the first time, you may have some concerns or questions. We've taken some of the most frequently asked questions from potential students and put together these answers, so that you can decide if it's right for you.

### Do I have the time?

One of the beauties of online study is that you can fit it around your existing commitments. That said, study will still take a certain amount of time per day or per week. Before committing to study, make sure you can set enough time aside to get the most out of your learning experience.

### Will I stay motivated and finish the course?

Yes! But make sure you choose a course that will keep you engaged. Whilst shopping around for a course and before signing up, be clear about the end result you'd like to achieve. Not only will this help you select the right course, it will help focus your attention on the end goal whilst studying.

### Will I be learning in isolation?

Look out for courses which offer student discussion forums either on the course platform, on social media, or both. These groups can be a source of invaluable information and support from fellow students. Good course providers will offer a range of support services too, in case you get into difficulty, such as live chat and email support.



## Will I be able to learn through a computer?

You may think online study involves a lot of reading, or a lot of listening but not much activity. The best online courses combine lesson formats to keep you interested and motivated throughout. For example, [gardencourses.com](https://www.gardencourses.com) lessons use a range of delivery methods. Whether you learn best through words, audio, visual or tactile learning, there will be a format to help you process and retain information.

## Will I remember everything I've learned once the course is over?

To help you remember what you've learned, look out for courses which encourage you to create a piece of work by the end of the course. Putting effort and research into creating an end product will help cement your learning as you go. Plus, you'll produce something that continues to be useful beyond the course itself.



### Will I be able to manage the techie stuff?

To successfully access most online course material, you'll need to make sure you have the right equipment, software, etc. If you have a relatively up-to-date PC, laptop, tablet or phone, you should be fine.

System requirements will vary by course provider, but as an example, our courses require that you have the following:

The most recent version of a web browser such as Chrome, Firefox, Safari and Microsoft Edge

The ability to open and download PDF files, and to watch and listen to short videos and audio files

Broadband internet connection with a minimum recommended speed of 5Mbps

(A full list of requirements for our courses are available on our website)



## OK, IT'S SOUNDS LIKE ONLINE STUDY IS FOR ME!

Great! Now you've decided to give studying online a go, we've put together the tips below to help you get the most out of your course.

(These tips are applicable for any type of course, not just [gardencourse.com](https://www.gardencourse.com) courses, so please save this document for future reference if you find the information useful.)

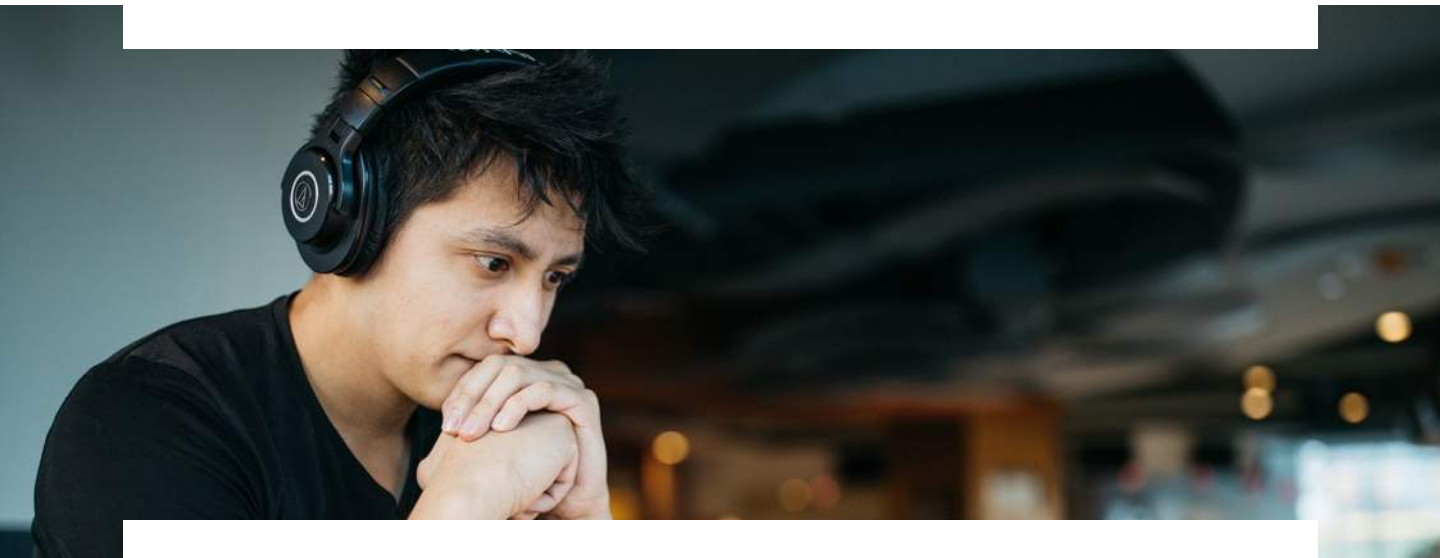
### Studying Good Practice

- Set specific times aside for your online learning and try to stick to them. Whatever your investment in a course, you signed up to study for a reason, so keep that reason in the forefront of your mind and don't let studying become your last priority.
- Let other people know you are studying. Setting out your intention to study helps both you and those around you realise you're serious about learning and your study time should be respected.
- Set yourself deadlines and targets. Without an end date or goal in place, it's easy to let studying slip down your order of priorities. Set dates by which you'd like to finish certain modules or coursework. Even if you don't stick to these deadlines 100%, it's good to have an overall picture of what you'd like to have achieved and by when, to keep you on the right track to completion.
- Like you would in a physical lesson, have a pen and paper or tablet handy so you're able to take notes during lessons.

## Concentration

We all have different concentration spans, so it's good to get in tune with yours. When you feel yourself zoning out, or becoming distracted by emails, social media, or the view from the window, it's time to take a break.

Sometimes, it's tough to shut out external noises. If you're undertaking a task that requires concentration, such as reading or writing, but you can't seem to get the required levels of quiet, you may find white noise useful. Find an online white noise track, plug in your headphones and be amazed at the levels of focus you can achieve!



## Course Materials

Some course providers may expect you to equip yourself with additional materials before starting or will send out a reading list when you enrol. It might be tempting to jump straight into Module 1, but taking time to read the pre-joining information will ensure Day 1 of studying goes smoothly.

At [gardencourses.com](https://gardencourses.com), our courses don't have any hidden extras or in-course purchases, but we may suggest you get hold of some things in advance, such as drawing pens and tracing paper. We let you know of these requirements before you enrol, so you can be prepared for day one.



## Making Space

Online study is all about studying at your own pace, in a way that feels comfortable for you. And if that means working with your laptop on the sofa or reading in bed, then go for it! But bear in mind that such informal settings may affect the way you work. Creating a dedicated workspace and deliberately moving into it at the start of a session and leaving it when your work is done can help create not only a physical space, but a corresponding mental mindset of productivity and concentration.

Good luck with your studies, we wish you every success.

Please visit us at [www.gardencourses.com](http://www.gardencourses.com) to find out more about our world-leading courses in horticulture.