

Staying Motivated & Dedicated

School can be a large source of stress, pressure, and overwhelm for students, which can make it hard to stay motivated and dedicated to your goals. This tip sheet will give you some ways to try and stay motivated to stay on track and maintain your wellbeing during your time in school.

Write down your goals.

Having a visual reminder of your goals can help to keep them at the front of your mind. You can even get creative - make a vision board or poster and put it somewhere so you can look at it daily.

Set small goals with small timeframes.

Set smaller-scale goals – think ‘daily’ or ‘weekly’. Make a ‘to-do’ list that incorporates academic and personal goals and tasks and allows you to check or cross off items as you complete them. This can help with prioritization and feelings of accomplishment.

Set larger goals with larger timeframes.

Larger goals might be things like research papers, internships, final exams, finishing a semester, etc. What do you need to accomplish over the course of a few weeks? Months? Years? Write these down. These larger goals might break down into smaller steps that you can also keep track of - consider using a calendar to track your progress. This can help you to see the bigger picture as you continue to progress.

Keep yourself accountable.

Set visual reminders and alarms on your phone and laptop to remind and encourage yourself of your goal. Download apps that remind you to do tasks. Break down your large assignments into smaller tasks. Share your goals with a friend, classmate, or someone in your life. Reach out to someone and ask them to help keep you accountable with your work and goals. Check in with this person face-to-face or online regularly to discuss your progress.

Take time to reflect & visualize.

What led you to be in your current school program? What challenges have you overcome to be here? Remind yourself of all the work you’ve already put in and all the choices you’ve already made to get yourself to this point. Where do you see yourself in five years? What do you want to be doing with your career? Keep these goals in your mind and remember that schooling is needed to achieve these career goals. It is short term pain for long term gain, just a necessary step towards a long career.

Focus on self-care and wellness.

Get enough sleep, build strong and attainable habits and routines (nutritious meals, exercise, meditation, study time) and stick with it. Consider starting a gratitude journal. If you’re feeling stuck, talk to someone – a trusted friend, a professor, a counsellor. Don’t be afraid to let them know that you’re struggling to stay motivated. Talking about how you feel can often help you feel better. If needed, ask them for referrals to other supports.

Reward yourself.

It’s important to treat yourself, relax, and take breaks. Have a plan or a list of favourite things (e.g., a walk, a movie night, a favorite dessert) that you use to reward yourself or help to keep yourself feeling positive and dedicated to your goals.