Structure and Routine - Transcript

**SUMMARY KEYWORDS**

routine, study, week, activities, work, ensure, sessions, support, include, schedule, overburdening, structure, effective, process, creating, tasks, lecture, academic staff, social, maintain

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Establishing a routine and structuring your working week may seem obvious at first. However, the benefits of maintaining this routine can positively impact multiple areas of your life, including better sleep, mitigating or reducing stress, feeling more energised and making more effective use of your time. An effectively planned routine can also ensure you make time for all necessary elements in your life including study, socialising, exercise, mealtimes, sleep, and rest. It will come as no surprise that studying at Cambridge can be quite demanding and sometimes feel overwhelming. Knowing what is expected of you can help you begin to plan your weeks and make the best use of your time. As soon as you can do so try speaking with your director of studies and other academic staff to understand what their expectations are and how you should be approaching the various aspects of your course. Once you better understand the expectations for study, it's time to begin creating your structure. People will manage their time in a way that suits them best, but the following is just one way to help you get started. Begin by listing out all the activities you do in a day or week. These don't need to be in fine detail but should include necessities such as looking after yourself and meal times to ensure a suitable time is set aside for them. A useful routine is one that works for you. So if, for example, you find it helpful to wake up earlier and get a jumpstart on the day, then include that to suit your lifestyle. Consistency is key here as the repetition and routine approach to your tasks can support more effective time spent as you become used to performing these tasks and entering the right mindset. As mentioned in our previous video, prioritise the required teaching throughout the week and aim to, where possible, make the time to participate in sessions with other students, rather than just accessing the recording if available. When you know which activities are meant to be completed each week, you can set aside time for them within your allotted study periods to ensure you enable yourself to engage with them fully. If you are unable to attend live sessions, such as lectures, consider setting the same time each week to catch up on the ones you've missed, so you are mentally prepared to take any information at the next session. A routine is not just about time, but space as well. Wherever possible, try to establish a particular area or set up for when you are working that is different to your relaxation and personal time. In some circumstances, this may be using a desk or visiting the library for work, creating a separate user profile on your computer or device to compartmentalise your life, or even as simple as a repeated process before and after studying to refocus and decompress, respectively. Short meditation, tidying, taking a walk, or any activity that allows your mind to process the day and step away from work for a time. Once you have your routine established, it may require some discipline to maintain. However, there are some things you can do to support your efforts. Consider sharing the idea with your peers and have everyone support one another with their schedules. Sharing the process and discussing it with others can help to resolve any potential problems and even scheduling times together to watch lecture recordings, attempt online activities, or visit the libraries for research can boost motivation, introduce a social aspect to learning and provide accountability for your study sessions. Remember that routines and structure are intended to help and support you not overwhelm. When creating your own make sure it remains realistic. Setting unobtainable goals from the outset will make sticking to it even more challenging. If you find you're struggling to fit everything into your week, then consider talking with friends, your director of studies, or the Student Advice Service to support you in making effective decisions and ensure you are not overburdening yourself. Don't be afraid to pause activities for a time if it means enabling yourself to rest and recuperate. It's worth noting that not everyone will identify a schedule that works for them right away. It can take time to develop a system that works for you, however flexible or focused that may be. The important part is to be aware of how you work best and where you may need to acknowledge limitations to look after yourself most effectively. Below you will find a series of links and resources to explore and help you define an effective structure for your day. Our next and final video will focus on wellbeing and taking care of yourself throughout term.