

Quick Tips: Making the Most of Online Therapy

If you have decided that trying online therapy might be for you, here are a few tips to make the most of your sessions.

Bring and take notes! Have your main issues or symptoms from in-between sessions written down so that you don't forget to bring them up. Write down the things during or at the end of the session that you want to remember.

Schedule your sessions at a good time. Make sure you have a good internet connection, and you won't be interrupted. Don't hesitate to go back and forth on appointment times for you – the whole point is for your convenience.

Choose your therapist carefully! Making sure we are a good "fit" is very important, so don't keep seeing someone if you don't like them. Research shows that regardless of what type of therapy occurs, the best predictor of success depends on the relationship you develop with your therapist.

Think about the goals you want to achieve. This not only keeps you and your therapist on track, but it can even remind you of how far you have come.

Prepare to be open. Say what's on your mind. I know this sounds really hard, but holding back in therapy only slows your progress. If you don't feel like you can talk to your therapist, they may not be the right fit. Make sure you feel okay opening up a bit and even talking about your thoughts on the therapy process itself.

Prepare to do some work. In therapy we will often give you some things to try in between sessions, listen to or read. It's important to practice new skills and create new experiences in your relationships and daily life. We can assess what's helping versus what's not, and move you closer to your goals.

Turn off your other apps / programs! Yes, your therapist can tell that you are reading an incoming message, email or otherwise getting distracted. We all struggle to disconnect sometimes, but this is dedicated time for you – it really does require your full attention. Turn off your notifications on your phone or laptop, so you aren't distracted, and the wi-fi doesn't glitch.

Turn off notifications on a [Mac](#), or on a [PC/Windows](#), on your [iPhone](#), or on an [Android](#) device – lots of incoming notifications can interrupt your video and distract you. **Do a speed test** if you are concerned about the strength of your wi-fi connection. Google "speed test" from wherever you are, with your device's internet browser.

Find Privacy – especially if you are socially distancing or quarantined with your family at home. **Ask** your family members to respect your privacy. You can use a separate room, bathroom, closet (your therapist won't care). Sometimes driveways still have good wi-fi access (check it ahead of time - you can also park in front of a public wi-fi, like Starbucks, and do your session from your car – our links are HIPPA secure and private). Use earbuds or headphones so only you can hear your therapist if you are unsure of your privacy. Finally, you can also download and play a [white noise audio file](#) on another device, place it near your door.

You can expect much of the same process you would have in person – introductions, discussions about consent, risks and benefits of psychotherapy, exploration of issues and some collaborative goal setting. You've got to do your best to ensure you have a private space to have your session, and again, a good internet connection. Any other concerns or logistical things you notice, you should bring up to your therapist – he or she might have a solution.

All the best in your exploration of the right mental health support that fits your needs and your life.