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Distance learning isn't just for kids: 12 online classes to nurture the mind, body and soul



(Luis Mendo for The Washington Post)

By

Fritz Hahn,
Angela Haupt,
Anying Guo,
Kelsey Ables,
Stephanie Williams and
Thomas Floyd

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With all the free time that the [coronavirus](#) shutdown has opened up in your life over the past several weeks, many of you, after bingeing “Tiger King” and all those unwatched seasons of “Breaking Bad,” are finally getting around to activities you’ve always believed will make you the well-rounded person of your dreams. (Paring down your Netflix watch list, while satisfying, is not exactly a model of self-improvement.) That’s where online courses come in. With face-to-face learning moving to the Internet, the Web has become the world’s classroom: a place for picking up knowledge and/or training in a way that’s accessible, fun and safe — and just might make you more interesting to hang out with. We checked out several classes that will not only help you keep your mind, body and spirit healthy in the short run but, when the world finally opens up again, could make going out a richer, more fulfilling experience.



Artist Jill Galloway, an artist and museum educator at the National Portrait Gallery, teaches online classes.
(National Portrait Gallery)

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National Portrait Gallery art classes

The National Portrait Gallery offers weekly art classes on [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#), courtesy of museum educator and artist Jill Galloway. Thursdays at 11 a.m. on Instagram, “Drawn to Figures” shows fledgling artists (age 13 and up) the basics of figure drawing. You don’t need to be a budding Picasso; lessons center on straightforward sketching techniques that you can easily replicate with pencil and paper. In one recent lesson, “Drawing with Values,” Galloway shows shading tricks for copying a charcoal portrait by John Singer Sargent, using a grayscale chart you can print out from the museum’s [website](#). Fridays at 11 a.m. on Facebook, “Open Studio” homes in on a broader range of styles, and is suitable for students of all ages. Galloway is careful to use supplies that are most likely already in your home. During a lesson on “Quilling” — a technique that uses folded colored paper to make whimsical designs — she devises an elegant, three-dimensional art piece in under four minutes, with just construction paper, glue, cardboard and scissors. Both classes are designed to be taken at your own pace, and run from three to seven minutes long.

Free.

[instagram.com/smithsoniannpg](https://www.instagram.com/smithsoniannpg) and
[facebook.com/smithsoniannpg](https://www.facebook.com/smithsoniannpg).

— S.W.

A screen image of an American Sign Language vocabulary lesson offered by Gallaudet University (ASL Connect)



Fritz Hahn

Fritz Hahn has covered bars, drinks and nightlife for The Washington Post's Weekend section since 2003, but he also writes about a variety of local entertainment topics. [Follow](#)



Angela Haupt

Angela Haupt is a freelance writer and full-time health editor in D.C. Her pieces have appeared in publications including Express, various Washington Post sections, Women's Health magazine, USA Today and Vice. [Follow](#)



Anying Guo

Anying Guo is an editorial aide for the Features section at The Washington Post, where she produces stories for the Sunday Arts and Style sections. She has interned at Voice of America and 826DC and has freelanced for the D.C.-based LGBTQ women's publication Tagg Magazine. [Follow](#)



Kelsey Ables

Kelsey Ables is an editorial aide in features focusing on visual art. Before joining The Washington Post in 2019, she wrote about visual culture and contemporary art for Artsy. [Follow](#)



Stephanie Williams

Stephanie is a freelance journalist covering music, art and culture for The Washington Post. Previously, she was the features editor and digital/social media producer for Washington Post Express. [Follow](#)



Thomas Floyd

Thomas Floyd is a multiplatform editor and contributing writer for The Washington Post. His work has been honored by the Society for Features Journalism, Society of Professional Journalists, American Copy Editors Society and National Arts & Entertainment Journalism Awards.

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