

GOALS : consider setting one or two goals for yourself

- **network** : Connect with new people, old colleagues, and potential new collaborators (including students!) that you can follow up with after the conference.
- **share research** : Confidently present research in front of audiences.
- **get feedback** : Receive feedback that helps inform future research and collaboration, and develop better presentation skills.
- **learn something new** : Set a goal based on what you want to learn (e.g., find out about new research developments in your field or new data visualization packages by attending a specific session). Longer lectures or invited talks can be a good space to achieve this goal.

CHALLENGES : here are some common challenges during conferences

- difficulty paying attention** : After a several hours or days of presentations, you may have trouble paying attention.
- managing time** : It's difficult to prioritize which talks to attend, especially if you move between sessions.
- getting overwhelmed** : With all the activities, people, and noise, you may feel overwhelmed.
- presentation anxiety** : You may experience nervousness and anxiety about presenting.
- learning to network** : It can be difficult to build new connections.
- taking care of yourself** : From not getting enough sleep, water, or food to getting sore feet from walking all day, it is hard to take care of yourself. Lack of funding can make this even more challenging.

STRATEGIES

plan your schedule ahead of time :

01. Prioritize key sessions to attend (talks, posters, and networking events)
02. Remain flexible to adjust as needed throughout the week

reach out to colleagues ahead of time to set up coffee or meal meetings :

01. People you don't often see, or have worked with in the past
02. People you are interested in collaborating with

plan to attend professional networking events :

01. These, as well as pre-conference workshops, can be great places to meet new people

prioritize sessions that align with your goals :

01. Rather than jumping from session to session, commit to one session at a time
02. Don't overlook posters, you can always take a quick photo of the poster and move on

give yourself space to take breaks when you need them :

01. Self-care is unique to everyone! Schedule in time-outs for yourself
02. Exercise, take a walk around the city, or visit the puppies in the Exhibit Hall at AGU
03. Make food a priority by researching places to eat ahead of the trip

practice your presentation ahead of time :

01. Work on your presentation (poster or talk!) ahead of time and do a few practice runs
 02. Make a note of what you want feedback on
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plan where you will keep notes ahead of time :

01. Pick a **consistent** place for notes – on your phone, a physical notebook, or a google doc
02. This is a space to brain dump, jot notes during talks, write down contact information, etc.

VIRTUAL : a lot of folks find virtual attendance hard

Commit the time : Fully commit to attending virtual sessions as if you were in person – it may help to lock a timeblock on your calendar.

Remain engaged and limit distractions : Minimize potential distractions (e.g., email and other work) by setting up guardrails so that you can focus on the conference. Active note taking may help with engagement.

Connect with other attendees : Do not be afraid to reach out to attendees (before, during, or after) to ask questions! Make sure to share your email so others can follow up with you.

Hone your presentation : Simplifying your poster or talk will help ensure your key takeaway is communicated effectively.

AFTER THE CONFERENCE : ways you can follow up

- **Summarize and organize notes and contact information :** Review and organize your notes, contact lists, and ideas.
- **Turn notes into action items :** Deep dive into research you enjoyed, apply a new method to your work, and follow-up with contacts via email.
- **Take time for yourself :** Recover by getting sleep, exercising, and doing things that fill your cup like personal travel or taking time off.

Broad historical perspective talks at national meetings can be very informative.

It's hard being an introvert in our profession, give yourself the space you need!

After returning to work, prioritize to-do things carefully and have some easy wins to get back to regular work.

OTHER RESOURCES : articles that discuss conference challenges and strategies

01. [Getting the Most out of a Professional Conference](#) by UC Berkeley
02. [Conference Survival Guide: Self-Care Basics To Save Your Sanity And Boost Your Energy](#) by Forbes
03. [Cultivating Wellness and Self-Care at Your Conference: A Holistic Approach](#) by Event Garde
04. [Recharge and Conquer: Self-Care Tips for Conference](#) by Active Minds