

Time Management



Why is time management important?

Did you know that out of the 168 hours in a week, the average college student will spend 147 hours in class, studying, eating, sleeping, attending to personal habits, and socializing. How efficiently these hours and the additional 21 other hours are spent, will help determine how successful you are in classes and everything else you attempt to accomplish. Planning time and avoiding procrastination are two key components to time management, leading to a balanced life and more free time to participate in everything you do.

Keys to Effective Time Management

Plan each day. Planning your day can help you accomplish more and feel more in control of your life. Write a to-do list, putting the most important tasks at the top. Keep a schedule of your daily activities to minimize conflicts and last-minute rushes.

Prioritize your tasks. Time-consuming but relatively unimportant tasks can consume a lot of your day. Prioritizing tasks will ensure that you spend your time and energy on those tasks that are truly important to you.

Say no to nonessential tasks. Consider your goals and schedule before agreeing to take on additional work.

Delegate. Take a look at your to-do list and consider what you can pass on to someone else.

Take the time you need to do a quality job. Doing work right the first time may take more time upfront, but errors usually result in time spent making corrections, which takes more time overall.

Break large, time-consuming tasks into smaller tasks. Work on them a few minutes at a time until you get them all done.

Practice the 10-minute rule. If you have a task you are not looking forward to, work on it for 10 minutes each day. Once you get started, you may find you can finish it.

Evaluate how you're spending your time. Keep a diary of everything you do for three days to determine how you're spending your time. Look for time that can be used more wisely. For example, could you take a bus or train to work and use the commute to catch up on reading? If so, you could free up some time to exercise or spend with family or friends.

Limit distractions. Block out time on your calendar for big projects. During that time, close your door and turn off your phone and email.

Take a break when needed. Too much stress can derail your attempts at getting organized. When you need a break, take one. Take a walk. Do some quick stretches at your workstation. Take a day of vacation to rest and reenergize.

Tip for Success

If you find you do not have enough time to complete your tasks, **keep a time use diary**— set an alarm on the hour and write down *everything* you did during the past hour (be honest!) Then examine if you are trying to accomplish too much or are becoming distracted without realizing it.



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Getting Organized: Creating a Week's Plan

Planning ahead is a great way to stay on top of everything you need to accomplish. Follow these steps and create a plan for this week:

1. Make a list of everything you need to do during a typical week. Include ALL activities—not just school work.
2. Convert the list into calendar format and add related activities (readings for courses, study sessions, practice.)
3. Prioritize your activities. What do you do if you find you have less time than you anticipated? You should determine the importance of each activity and use this to revise your schedule. To help, place a number signaling how important an activity is next to it on your calendar and use those rankings to adjust, if needed.

Myths About Time Management

Before exploring specific time-management techniques, consider several common myths which contribute to poor time management, especially undermining your efforts to establish and follow your priorities:

Myth: My life is completely controlled by external events.

Fact: You can have some control over many aspects of your life, but you and you alone are responsible for initiating that control. Learn to recognize what you can and can't control before making your choices. Anticipate the future and clarify the external demands that must be faced. From there, it is easier to determine what can be done, and within what time frame, despite the demands.

Myth: I should meet everyone's expectations.

Fact: The needs and demands of others may be inappropriate for you and your lifestyle. They may be poorly timed, highly questionable, or simply unattainable. They may be of a different priority than your own. By trying to meet the expectations of others, you may be shortchanging yourself and your needs. First, become clear about what your needs are and then consider what others expect of you.

Myth: I should have no limits.

Fact: We all have limits . . . failure to acknowledge this may cause you to become perfectionistic in your expectations. Perfectionists are especially prone to procrastination because the perfection they demand is impossible. For example, no paper will ever be perfect in all ways. The immediate consequence of turning in an imperfect paper may be brief, acute anxiety, but the long-term consequences of procrastination—e.g., inconveniences, academic or career losses and lingering self doubts—are usually more devastating.

RESOURCES

University Counseling Service

3223 Westlawn South

319-335-7294

ucs@uiowa.edu

<http://counseling.studentlife.uiowa.edu/>

Academic Support & Retention

310 Calvin Hall

319-335-1497

tutoriowa@uiowa.edu

<http://tutor.uiowa.edu>

Works Cited:

- www.ugcc.edu/counselingservices/Time-Management.pdf
www.sru.edu/academics/enrollment/academicservices/documents/college%20success%20brocures/time%20Management.pdf
learninghigher.ac.uk/resources/files/Time%20management/time_how_succed_1.pdf
<http://www.counselingcenter.illinois.edu/self-help-brochures/academic-difficulties/time-management/>
<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/time-management/wl00048>