

Buying T-I-M-E!

Managing Time for Success in College

Time is one of our most important resources. To a college student, time-management can make the difference between a mediocre and a superior performance. To manage time effectively, you must control it. When you do not consciously control time, your old habits will control your time and set limits on your achievements.



The first two **crucial steps** in taking control of time are :

- (1) **establishing goals, and**
- (2) **following a schedule.**

A Month-at-a-Glance Calendar

Write all important dates on a month-at-a-glance calendar. Note when assignments, themes are due. Record dates for quizzes, tests, mid-terms, final examinations, and presentations. These dates are your goals and referring often to your calendar will help you keep focused on your goals.

A Weekly Priority List

Before each school week begins, prepare a weekly priority list that takes into account both short and long-term assignments. Break down long-term assignments into manageable pieces and to monitor progress toward your goals.

A Semester Plan

You need to construct a plan for achieving your semester goals that is flexible enough to adjust to your weekly priorities. A semester plan is an effective program for reaching your goals. If you construct and conscientiously follow a semester plan, you will establish good time management habits and program yourself for success.

How do you Create a Semester Plan? In order to create an efficient schedule for yourself follow these steps:

- **Identify committed time.** Record those things you must do and/or will do and record the times attached to each activity. Include class and work times, family activities, exercise times, commuting, etc.
- **Identify personal time.** Record time for sleeping, eating, grooming, doing household chores, etc.
- **Estimate study time.** Estimate how much study time you will need for each class. Begin by following the two-for-one rule. Allot more time to difficult classes and less time to easier classes.
- **Establish a study plan.** Set specific times for studying.
- **Plan for peak periods of concentration.** Determine when your high and low periods of concentration occur. Reserve peak times for intensive study.
- **Schedule study times according to class periods and course formats.** Study close to the time you are in class. For a class in which you discuss and recite, plan to study just before class begins. For a lecture course, plan to study soon after the class ends.
- **Study in time blocks.** Plan 50 minute blocks of study time separated by 10 minute rest periods.
- **Study difficult subjects first.** When you begin studying, your mind is alert and fresh and your concentration is better. Do not give in to the temptation to get easy things and little assignments out of the way first.
- **Practice distributed learning.** Study a subject one hour each of three nights rather than three hours in one evening. You will master the material more easily if you follow this method.
- **Use daylight hours productively.** Research shows that each hour used for study during the day is equal to one and one-half hours used at night.
- **Make your semester plan livable.** Allow adequate time for eating well-balanced meals, sleeping eight hours a night, resting quietly, and relaxing with friends.
- **Revise your plan.** You probably will not construct the best plan for your needs the first time.

Timesaving Tips

Once you have constructed a realistic schedule of activities, you will want to find other ways to become a more efficient student. If you adopt the following timesaving tips, you probably can increase your efficiency.

- Look critically at your habits and methods. Improve your skills. Learn how to read your text-books, take class notes, and organize material more efficiently. Learn how to take tests more effectively. Improving your skills will help you get more value from your study time.
- Form the habit of studying in one place that is conducive to study. Study in a quiet well-lighted place, free from distractions. Study in the same place as a matter of routine. A routine of study in one place establishes an association between the studying habit and the place. Eventually, being in your place of study will make it easier for you to begin. Be sure not to select a place to study that you already associate with another activity. Do not study on your bed or in your favorite TV chair.
- Use spare moments. Always carry pocket work so you can study while waiting in lines, eating alone, etc. While walking from class, recall the main points of the lecture you just heard. While walking to class, recall the main points of the the previous lecture. While exercising, think up topics for a paper or work out a topical outline in your head. Use spare moments for memorizing, reviewing, organizing, reflecting, etc.
- Use lists to keep yourself organized and save time. Keeping lists and combining activities can reduce the time you need to do things.

Give Yourself Every Chance to Succeed

Realize that most people let their attitudes and behaviors set limits on their accomplishments. But you can accomplish your goals if you let your goals shape your attitudes and behaviors. If you focus on your goals and adopt the following attitudes and behaviors, you will help yourself succeed.

- Be tough on yourself. Make a habit of setting an alarm and obeying it. Try not to play games with yourself. Realize that laziness, procrastination, distractibility, and daydreaming are self-defeating behaviors. Avoid making excuses for yourself and exceptions in your study schedule and routines.

- Recognize when you are trying to do too much. If life becomes too pressured, hectic, and unmanageable, consider dropping a course. Do not worry about getting behind schedule for graduation. The majority of college students take longer than four years to earn their degrees. Time pressures often are the cause of failures in college. So, do not try to do too much.

- Be determined and courageous. Realize that you will be successful if you focus on your goals. Be aware that following a time schedule and dedicating yourself to your studies takes courage.

Sources: Walter Pauk, *How to Study in College* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co.) 1984; and Kathleen McWhorter, *Study and Thinking Skills in College* (Glenview: Scott, Foresman/Little, Brown College Division) 1988.

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Our goal is to help you achieve YOUR goal!