One of the tools that successful students use well is time management. Effective time management will allow you to achieve your goals and live a balanced and healthy life. The goal of this resource is to provide you with strategies to improve your time management skills.

As a student, you must be aware that there are 24 hours in a day and 168 hours in a week. Your success is determined by how well you piece together the hours of each day to attend class, study, work, care for others, manage your household, sleep, eat, and take care of your personal needs.

This resource provides guidance on the following time management strategies to help you become a more effective student:

- Evaluate how you currently use your time.
- Establish priorities so that you can spend more time on your most important tasks.
- Understand your body rhythms and habits to create a schedule that maximizes your strengths and minimizes stressors.
- Create a daily schedule using an organizational system.
- Learn strategies to end procrastination.

**“We must use time as a tool, not as a couch.”**
—John F. Kennedy

**VOCABULARY**

**Priorities**
Tasks and activities that need to be done to accomplish goals.

**Procrastination**
Putting off a task until another time.

**Prime Time**
The time when you are most effective.

**Time Bandits**
Tasks and activities that are low-priority. These activities can steal time that could be used for higher priority activities.
SETTING PRIORITIES

Think about what you would like to accomplish for the semester, and then determine how to accomplish these goals by determining your priorities—the tasks and activities that you need to complete to accomplish your goals. Try to rank your priorities:

- “1” represents a priority that must be done at a specific time (e.g. working, turning in assignments on time).
- “2” should be assigned to tasks that must be done, but are not urgent or related to your immediate long-term goals (e.g. taking a shower, driving to work, paying bills, studying for a test a week away).
- “3” should be assigned to the items with the lowest priority.

EVALUATING
TIME USE

Begin by assessing how you spend each hour of each day for a few days (see Weekly Schedule). Document the time you spend on the following activities: studying, working, attending class, socializing, traveling, grooming, eating, sleeping, caring for others, etc. Once you have tracked your time, look for themes in your current time use.

If you are spending time doing things that are not helping you achieve your goals (time bandits), begin reducing time spent on these activities. Spend the most time doing activities that are categorized as Level 1.

FINDING MORE TIME TO STUDY

Now that you have determined your priorities, you can focus on the tasks and activities that are most important and postpone or eliminate low-priority tasks. Here are some ways you can make time for studying:

- Study in short segments throughout the day.
- Use a timer or mobile app to place time limits on low priority activities.
- Record notes from class and listen to the notes while commuting.
- Study everywhere and anywhere. Turn “standing in line time” to study time.
- Use the hours between classes to complete reading or homework assignments.
- Build study time into your schedule.
CLOCKING YOUR BODY’S RHYTHM

Some people are night owls; others do better in the morning or afternoon. Clocking your body’s rhythms will help you create a schedule that maximizes your strengths and reduces stress.

If you function best in the morning, you should try to schedule your courses and studying in the morning. Some students like to schedule all their classes on Mondays and Wednesdays and leave the other days for reading and homework.

How Much Time Should Be Spent on School Work?

A general rule is that students should spend about three hours studying for every hour they spend in class.

Typical College Schedule

15 hours attending class
45 hours reading, studying, preparing

Answer: 60 hours per week

SCHEDULING TIME

- Use a planning tool to manage your time. (calendar, homework app, agenda books, etc.)
- Record all assignments in one place.
- Create a daily to-do list.
- Schedule both study and personal time.
- Use your own system of checking off tasks.
- Schedule reminders separately from due dates.
- Write down due dates the moment work is assigned.
- Be specific and use action words. (For example, Use “write introduction for English paper,” instead of “English paper.”)
AVOIDING PROCRASTINATION

Most of us put off and delay tasks that need to be accomplished—otherwise called procrastination. We put off tasks that we do not enjoy, that may take a long time, or that we think we might fail at; or we get distracted with lower-priority tasks. Procrastination can lead to stress, lower quality work, or high-priority tasks not getting done. Moreover, procrastination may make the task harder than it would have been if you had not procrastinated. Here are some steps to help you combat procrastination:

- **Begin with an easy part of the task** and then tackle harder tasks. Completing the simpler parts will make the harder parts seem more approachable.

- **Work as a group.** Knowing that you need to meet with others will be incentive to accomplish your task.

- **Break difficult assignments into manageable steps.** If you can focus on one small step at a time, the assignment may become less stressful.

- **Ask someone for help.** If you are stuck, ask a colleague, an instructor, or someone in the Academic Support Center for assistance. Sometimes another person can offer a suggestion to get you started.

- **Finally, reward yourself!** Give yourself a reward when you complete a major assignment. Rewards can help you stay motivated!
## WEEKLY SCHEDULE

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Keep track of the way you spend your time each day for up to seven days.

Insert the amount of time you spend on the following activities during each one-hour period: Personal care, eating, classes, studies, work, recreation, caring for others, travelling, and sleep.
The Academic Support Center (ASC) offers an array of services designed to strengthen students’ skills and abilities in areas critical to college success. Services include peer tutoring in writing in all content areas, foreign languages (Spanish and French), and help with study skills, oral communications/presentations, and critical reading and thinking. Also, the ASC refers students to specialized tutoring that may be available in other departments.

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“Time flies. It's up to you to be the navigator.”
—Robert Orben

REFERENCES


