



Time Management



Scheduling Your Time and Increasing Your Productivity

How Much Should You Study?

There is no hard rule. The old maxim of 2 hours for each hour of class time is probably unrealistic and even unnecessary for most students. Experiment in order to find the amount of study time appropriate to meet your needs. As a rough guideline, try spending at least 30 to 35 hours per week in academic activities (classes, labs and studying).

Time Scheduling

Consider the following:

- 168 hours in a week
- 56 hours of sleep (generous)
- 21 hours of eating (gluttonous!)
- 20 hours of attending class and labs

That leaves 71 hours a week, or 10 hours a day for study, recreation, and everything else. How you use these remaining hours will impact how well you perform in your studies.

Consider making a schedule. A time schedule frees you from making top-level decisions constantly, allowing you to make the best use of your time.

Start by making a record of your fixed activities such as classes, meals, meetings, etc. Allow adequate time for routine daily activities such as eating, sleeping, dressing, exercising, etc. Each week, add information revolving around class assignments; note due dates and estimate study time required.

Remember these principles of time management when deciding how to spend your study time:

- Keep a calendar: write all appointments, meetings, and deadlines on your calendar.
- Plan your day at a regular time. Take 5 to 10 minutes to set your priorities first thing in the morning -- or the night before.
- Do the highest priority tasks first.
- Allow larger blocks of time for learning new material, grasping concepts, drafting a theme, etc. Divide those larger blocks of time into definite subparts the length of your concentration span (20 to 50 minutes) followed by 5 to 10 minute break.

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- As you begin work on each subpart, jot down the time you expect to finish; when you're through, reward yourself with a brief break.
 - Use short periods of time (15 to 45 minutes) to review. It's especially wise to spend a few minutes reviewing immediately BEFORE a class involving discussion or recitation. Immediately AFTER a lecture class, spend a few minutes reviewing your notes.
 - Schedule harder study tasks when you are most alert and can concentrate best. Use your high productivity hours for your most important projects. Use your low productivity hour(s) for easy-to-do projects and casual reading
 - Do something daily - don't let it pile up! Don't blow off the weekends as a time to study.
 - Plan to really learn the first time; the rest of your study time should be spent reviewing through recitation, discussion, making up and answering possible test questions, etc.
 - Adjust your schedule when necessary. Leave some flex time in your schedule to allow for the unexpected. Be realistic. Avoid too much detail or over planning. Your schedule is meant to allow you to control your own time, not to let time control you.
 - If you deviate from your schedule or if you don't follow it for several days or even weeks, DON'T BE DISCOURAGED! Get back to your schedule or revise it if it is unrealistic.

Time Management Tips

- Write down your ideas. Lists can help you clarify what's most important, what needs to be done today, tomorrow, etc. The act of crossing off accomplished tasks is reinforcing – it motivates you to complete additional items on your list.
- Carry easily portable cards or cassette tapes to jot down ideas wherever you are.
- Carry reading materials with you at all times. Use waiting time to read.
- If something isn't clear, ask for clarification. Do not assume.
- Use travel time to listen to important material.
- Tackle time consuming projects in stages.
- Keep your work area free of papers you are not working on that day. This prevents papers from being mixed up or lost.
- Have a place for everything. Get rid of clutter. Clutter can help you feel disorganized and overwhelmed.
- Notice any "time wasters" or habits that get in the way of producing the results you want.

- Institute a quiet time in your day, preferable in the morning, to think effectively.
- Concentrate on one item at a time.
- Mark what you read with a high-lighter or pencil.
- Close your door and turn off the music or TV. Put out the do not disturb sign!
- Learn to say “no” – make a habit to politely say “no” to requests that are not in your best interest.
- Delegate to your family, roommates, etc., the items they are capable of doing.
- Reconsider the importance of tasks. What activities can be eliminated? (Don’t eliminate all recreational activities).
- Plan to have lunch with a friend periodically, or do something recreational.
- Set time limits on visits.
- Block interruptions from others. Enlist support from friends and family to honor your study times.
- Share time saving ideas with others.
- Take a speed- reading class.
- Congratulate yourself for every little accomplishment, setting yourself up for further success.
- See mistakes and problems as opportunities to grow and learn more about yourself and time management.
- Don’t be a perfectionist, but give every project your best within the time and priority constraints you have set.
- Carry duplicate car keys in your handbag or backpack. Leave duplicate house keys with a neighbor.
- Ask yourself – “what is the best use of my time right now?” (What can I accomplish right now in this given time frame.)
- Finally, don’t be too hard on yourself. Old habits are tough to change. Concentrate on where you’ve succeeded, and correct for where you’ve missed the target and not succeeded. Success breeds success, even little ones!

REMEMBER – TIME IS A VALUABLE RESOURCE – USE IT TO SUPPORT YOU WITH WHAT YOU WANT TO ACCOMPLISH. PLAN YOUR LIFE AND THEN LIVE YOUR PLAN.