

Time Management

Make a Master Schedule and Stick To It!

- Block out exam times and any other fixed time commitments, such as work or organizational meetings.
- Block out time for the basics of daily living, i.e. eating, sleeping, personal maintenance, and travel.
- Plan and block out study time for each class. Some tips:
 - Plan at least one-hour blocks for study, and schedule large blocks of time for accomplishing major projects.
 - Know your high energy and "down" times during the day and use them wisely.
- Murphy's Laws:
 - Anything that can go wrong will go wrong.
 - Everything takes longer than you think it will.
- Parkinson's Law: Work tends to expand to fill the time allotted.
- Balance your activities -- schedule de-stressing times to allow yourself to unwind:
 - Schedule reward times for using study time effectively.
 - Schedule time for physical exercise and recreation.
 - Schedule social activities, including time for just chatting.
- Keep your schedule flexible! Many experts advise allowing two hours of unscheduled time in a twenty-four hour period.
- Now review your schedule: Is it realistic? Can you stick to it?

Make To Do Lists

- Before the beginning of each week, sit down and list all of the things you need to get done in the upcoming week. You may want to assign tasks to given days of the week if you have a tight schedule. Consult your master or weekly schedule if assigning tasks to given days. Be sure to check your month calendar to plan ahead for large tasks.
- Prioritize tasks; for each item on your list, apply the following "test":
 - Is this something I must get done, should get done, or could complete? Assign each task to a category according to its priority. You can use a 1, 2, 3 system; an A, B, C arrangement; or M, S, C (for must, should, could). You may even want to assign times to the "I's" if you have a very hectic day ahead.
- Carry your To Do list with you during the day. Consult it when needed to make sure that you at least complete your "I's" or "musts" during the course of the day.
- Review your list at the end of the day. Reward yourself for tasks completed on schedule and make any adjustments needed during the rest of the week

An Example: Monday

- (2) Read 3 chapters in Psychology
- (2) Call home
- (3) Go to the bookstore
- (1) Begin to explore a topic
- (2) Jog
- (1) Complete math homework
- (1) Meet Jim at 5:00

General Time Management Tips:

- Learn to set priorities on things like goals, tasks, meeting agenda items, interruptions.
- Start with "A-priority" tasks
- Ask "Is this the best use of my time?"
- Fight procrastination; do it now if it's important.
- Subdivide large, tough tasks into smaller, easily accomplished parts.
- Establish a quiet hour, even though it requires will power and may not always work.
- Find a hideaway. The library or a study room in your dorm.
- Learn to say "no" when you've got something important to do.
- Accumulate similar tasks and do them all at one time.
- Minimize routine tasks; spend only the time they deserve. Shorten low-value interruptions. Throw away junk mail and other low-value paperwork.
- AVOID PERFECTIONISM. Remember the 80/20 maldistribution rule. (80% of the job can be done in 20% of the time that it would take to do 100% of the job.)
- Avoid over-commitment. Be realistic about what you can do in the time you have.
- Don't over-schedule. Allow some flexible time for crises and interruptions.
- Set time limits. For example, some decisions shouldn't take more than three minutes to make. Know how to recognize these.
- Concentrate on what you are doing.
- Use big blocks of time for big jobs.
- Do difficult things quickly; waiting doesn't make them easier.
- Try to handle paper only once.
- Think the task through before acting.
- Finish as you go; get it right the first time.

