

## **Time Management & Organization**

### **A Student Academic Learning Services Workshop**



## Time Management

### What is Time Management?



#### Time Management

We all have similar time limitations; we all have exactly 168 hours in a week. Some typical time management issues are:

- Too little time for tasks to be done
- Always “catching up”
- Balance between school and social life
- Balance a job and/or family responsibilities with school

The goal of time management is to prioritize activities, control how time is spent, and use time more efficiently.

Time management is really *self-management!*

### Where Does the Time Go?

#### Time Audit

Learn how you are currently using your time by performing a time audit. On the back of this handout is a calendar you can use to determine your weekly routine. Starting today...

- Record what you are doing during each hour you are awake.
- Be brief, but honest. Include *where* you were doing each task/activity.
- Record your normal activities for an entire week.
- Make note of any extraordinary events.

At the end of one week...

- Review your week and analyze how you are spending your time.
  - Outside of class, are you spending more time on study or leisure?
  - Do you have one or more hours of time spent studying for each hour of class?
  - How were you using your time before, between, and after class?
  - Did you have any physical activity included in your week?

By looking at how much time you spend on different activities you will be able to figure out how you are using your time. The next step is to evaluate your priorities and decide where you want to make some changes.

## Tools for Time Management



### Clock/Timer

Have a watch or phone to help keep track of time; monitor how much time you spend on activity and compare it to your schedule.



### Class schedule

Choose a different colour for each course and highlight it in your schedule. It is good to associate each course with a colour and continue using it for binders, folders, highlights in your calendar, etc.



### Course outline

Read each course outline carefully to determine the workload and how marks are being allocated. Transfer all deadlines to your monthly calendar and agenda, and schedule time to work on each assignment or study for each test.



### Wall calendar or Master calendar

This is a **monthly** calendar or master calendar of the entire semester. Record all of your assignments, tests etc. from your course outline. Also record important events in your personal life as well. Plan ahead for busy weeks when multiple assignments are due.



### Personal agenda

This contains your **weekly** timetable. Your student agenda works well for this function. Fill in your class schedule, tests, assignments and personal activities such as sports, grocery shopping etc. Then, referring to your monthly calendar, block off time for reviewing notes from class, studying for tests, and working on assignments.



### To do lists

This is your **daily** to-to list. Prepare this the night before and refer to your weekly calendar. Carry forward any items not completed, and highlight those items of highest priority. Tick off each task as it is completed.

## Strategies for Time Management



### **Recognize when you are most productive and schedule accordingly**

Are you a morning person or a night owl? Everyone has an internal clock that regulates when he/she is the most alert. Schedule studying of your most difficult subjects at your most productive times of day.

### **Consider ALL your responsibilities**

Don't forget to schedule time for jobs, family, recreation, exercising, socializing and personal care (hygiene, sleeping, eating etc.).

### **Set Priorities**

Get the highest priority items done first, even if they are the ones you enjoy the least. Revisit your list of priorities and don't be afraid to drop unimportant items.

### **Make action plans**

- Monthly
- Weekly
- Daily ("To-Do" List)

### **Always go to class**

Reading the presentation later is no substitute for attending the lecture. The professor will be teaching what he/she considers important and your notes taken in class are useful for studying from later.

### **Use spare time wisely**

Look for small gaps in your schedule and make use of them. Even small chunks of time can be valuable.

## Strategies for Time Management Continued...



### **Don't procrastinate**

Avoiding work or problems generally just makes things worse in the long run. Break onerous tasks down and start with the easiest part. You may try working in a group. If you are having trouble getting started, seek help early.

### **Delegate if possible**

Perfectionists have trouble delegating, but trying to do everything by yourself can be exhausting. Take advantage of help that may be offered, and remember, no one is perfect.

### **Reward yourself and stay motivated**

Use leisure activities as rewards for achieving goals to help keep motivation high. Make deals with yourself, e.g. if you get your chapter finished you can watch TV. Under normal circumstances, decide to work for a specific length of time (no longer than an hour) and take a short break before continuing.

### **Be flexible**

Changes to your life can and will happen; what is important is how you deal with these events. Use your critical thinking skills to come up with solutions to problems. Try not to become stressed by changes that occur with positive thinking and by maintaining balance in your life.

### **Be committed**

Time management is self-management; remind yourself of your goals and how good it feels to accomplish them. Break goals down into manageable pieces if the big picture is overwhelming. Being in college or university means you are now fully responsible for yourself. Be responsible and take initiative.

## Making the Most of Study Time



### **Study difficult subjects or materials first**

Resist the temptation to complete household chores or even fairly mindless homework before you begin the really difficult work. Both kinds of tasks can be used to avoid the more difficult work and to exaggerate your sense of accomplishment.

### **Study in short blocks or “chunks”**

Study in short time blocks with breaks in between. These short breaks will help maintain your focus and avoid wasting valuable study time. Remember “all-nighters” don’t work for most people as they lose the ability to focus and are too fatigued the next day to perform well on a test.

### **Find a good work location**

Your aim should be to find a regular spot that offers a minimum of distractions. Make sure that you use your study place for studying and not for other activities. The point is to build an association between studying and your study place so that it becomes a way of prompting work, not avoiding it. The library generally works well for most people.

### **Overlap activities if possible**

Dovetail or combine activities whenever possible. Study or review notes while at the laundromat. Plan your homework for the evening during your commute home on public transit.

### **Learn to say “No”**

Learn that it is okay to reclaim your time by saying “no” to some things in order to accomplish other things.

### **Eat a balanced diet**

Personal wellness is vital. Make time to eat a balanced diet. Your body cannot function well without fuel. Also, be sure to get enough sleep and exercise.

## Organization: Start Off Organized!!!



No one is born with organizational skills; they must be learned and practiced. Organizing things and thoughts is a common task for many people. Organization involves creating routine and order with a sense of predictability. Make organization your habit through repetition.

There are many aspects of school life over which students have little or no control. Students do, however, have control over things such as the organization of their class notes, binders, backpacks, lockers, homework and using time wisely to prepare for tests and exams.

### Tools for Organization

- Semester timetable (a schedule for all your class times)
- Course outline for each subject (a description of each course you are taking)
- A binder for every subject
- Dividers (to help keep your notes, assignments, and tests for each course organized)
- Coloured highlighters (coloured markers used to highlight important information)
- Agenda
- Four month erasable calendar

### Organize Your Binder

- Use a differently coloured binder for each subject.
- Make a copy of your timetable for each binder.
- Choose a colour for each subject – the same colour as the binder.
- On your timetable, highlight (in the appropriate colour) the hours for each subject.
- Put timetables in protective plastic sheets and put them at the front of each binder.
- Put your course outline immediately after your timetable in each binder.
- Use labeled dividers to separate notes, assignments, and tests.

## Time Audit

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
<b>0700 am</b>							
<b>0800 am</b>							
<b>0900 am</b>							
<b>1000 am</b>							
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Notes: