UNDERSTANDING HOW TO USE YOUR TIME EFFECTIVELY
AND INTELLIGENTLY.

It doesn’t take college students too long to realize that managing their time is one of the biggest challenges of being at school. In college, students have less in class time than in high school, more work outside of class, and a lot of freedom and flexibility. On top of that, college is also a time to meet new people and engage in new activities outside of class. With all that college has to offer, students may feel as though they are short on time or be inclined to put important things off by procrastinating. Having strong time management skills can make all the difference.

20 Time Management Tips

2. Write a “To Do” list everyday [See How to Make a “TO DO” List].
3. Write your “To Do” list in your appointment book.
4. Plan the hours of your day in advance.
5. Make allowances in your schedule for brief periods of free time and relaxation.
6. Ask yourself what things do NOT need to be done. Then don’t do them.
7. Schedule your social life so that it does not interfere with your time (or vice versa).
8. Learn to say “NO.” If you are asked to do things and you cannot see how it will help you meet your goals, then don’t commit to it.
9. Control interruptions. Close your door and do not answer your phone if you are in the middle of studying. Find somewhere free of interruptions.
10. Nobody is perfect, so don’t try to be. The extra time required is usually not worth it. Sometimes the pressure of trying to be perfect leads to avoiding tasks altogether. This does not mean one should be careless—try to strike a balance.
11. As much as possible, schedule study periods so that they directly precede or follow the given class being studied. This will increase the likelihood of remembering what you learn.
12. Make good use of free time during the day and week so all of your studying does not fall in the evening or on the weekend when you might not be at your peak.
13. Identify when during the day or week you are at your sharpest, or most alert, and schedule the most difficult studying during those times. Use times when you are dull-witted to do laundry or run errands.
14. ELIMINATE CLUTTER! Throw things out or file them away as soon as you don’t need them anymore.
15. Do each task only once. If the task is too big to handle in one sitting, divide it into tasks that are no more than a half hour or an hour.
16. Ask yourself “What is the best use of my time right now?”
17. Listen well. Make certain you understand the directions so you don’t waste your time doing something wrong, only to have to do it over.
18. TV is addictive. Ask yourself, “Do I really need to watch that rerun of Friends or X-Files?”
19. Concentrate on one thing at a time. Decide what you will do, and then do only that.
20. Spend more time planning. Good planning about how to do something typically results in your spending less time doing it.
HOW TO MAKE A "TO DO" LIST

A "to do" list is a technique to aid you in better organizing and defining the tasks you need to complete and to help you become more efficient.

The “ABC” Priority System

A = high value items (you get the most out of doing these first)
B = medium value items (important but not essential)
C = low value items (“when I have time” items)

Follow these rules:
1. Never do a C or B when you have an A to do.
2. Never do a C just because you can get it out of the way in a short amount of time you have. Do an A!
3. Regarding C’s, ask yourself: What will happen if I don’t do this C? If the answer is “nothing”, then don’t do it!

What do you have to do today?

The primary tool of good planning is...

SCHEDULING.

When thinking about scheduling, keep the following in mind:
1. Scheduling = Freedom. By including time for fun and relaxation in your schedule, you’ll ensure you have time.
2. Be sure to take advantage of this freedom by scheduling enjoyable breaks. Examples would be regular 3 minute study breaks, spending an hour for lunch with friends, etc.
3. Use a daily calendar and stick to it!
4. Consider your internal clock (when you work best) as well as the external clock (such as when the library is open) when making your schedule.
5. Be assertive! Make time for important tasks and minimize distractions when trying to complete items on your to-do list.
6. To correctly estimate time, work backwards from the due date for tasks.
7. Be flexible. When something unexpected alters your schedule, remember you can swap items in your schedule within the same day or even the same week where possible. If you miss a scheduled task, don’t allow negative self-talk to stop you from moving on to the next task or rescheduling as necessary.

Tips to remember when making a list:
- Get in the habit of doing it every morning
- Be specific: define exactly what you have to do
- Break your tasks into small steps— it leads to greater success
- Ask yourself if its feasible for you to complete all your list items during the day
- Ask yourself if you will feel good about yourself if you complete all your tasks for the day

Example of INEFFECTIVE “TO DO” List:
- Study Chemistry
- Do lab report
- Write English paper
- Do laundry

Example of EFFECTIVE “TO DO” List:
- Study Chemistry
  - Reread Ch. 3, pp. 10-20
  - Reread Ch. 3, pp. 21-30
  - Review lecture notes from 10/1
- Make flashcards of formulas
- Do Lab Report
  - Outline report
  - Write up report
  - Edit report
- Write English Paper
  - Pick topic
  - Collect sources in library
  - Outline
  - Write paper
  - Do laundry

BLANK TO DO LISTS AND WEEKLY SCHEDULES

IN THIS PACKET

Make some copies to start improving your time management skills and productivity TODAY!
**The Perfectionist:** “I’d like to finish what I’m doing, BUT I want it to be perfect!”

Perfectionists can be reluctant to start or finish a task because they do not want to do anything less than a perfect job. Although their primary concern is not to fall short of their own lofty standards, they often worry about failing the high expectations that they believe other people have of them. Unfortunately, once they’ve begun a task, they often can’t resist spending far more time and energy on it than is required.

**The Overdoer:** “I’d do it now, BUT I have so much to do.”

Overdoers procrastinators say “yes” too much because they are unable or unwilling to make choices and establish priorities. In other words, they have not really mastered the art of decision-making. Because of this liability, they tend to be inefficient in managing time, organizing resources, and resolving conflicts. The result is that they try to do too much at once and, inevitably, fail.

**The Crisis-Maker:** “I’d do it now, BUT I only get motivated at the last minute.”

The crisis-maker needs to live on the edge. Addicted to the adrenaline rush of intense emotion, constant challenge, and emergency action, crisis-makers delight in pulling things off at the last minute. To them, procrastination is a form of adventure. Adventures, however, are by nature risky, and the crisis-maker procrastinator often loses out.

**The Dreamer:** “I’d like to start doing it, BUT I hate all the bothersome details.”

The dreamer wants life to be easy and pleasant. Difficult challenges that confront the dreamer can automatically provoke resistance: “That might be hard to do” gets translated into “I can’t do it.” Dreamers are very skilled in developing grandiose ideas, but they seem incapable of turning their sketchy ideas into realities: a pattern that frustrates themselves as well as people around them.

**The Worrier:** “I could do it, BUT I’m afraid to change.”

Worriers have an excessive need for security, causing them to fear risk. They proceed too timidly through life, worrying incessantly about “what ifs.” Faced with a new situation or demand, they become easily anxious, because anything new involves change and, therefore, unknown and potentially undesirable consequences. Once they start a project, they’re likely to drag it out in an effort to help “soften the blow.”

**The Defier:** “I could do it, BUT why should I have to?”

The defier is a rebel, seeking to buck the rules. Some defiers are openly proud of their tendency to procrastinate, precisely because it goes against the “normal” or “logical” way to do things. By procrastinating, they are setting their own schedule—one that nobody else can predict or control. Other defiers are more subtle—they don’t flout their opposition, they simply don’t take on the responsibility to do it in a timely manner (i.e., “passive aggressive”).

**PROCRASTINATION**

Which sounds most like YOU?
PROCRASTINATION QUIZ

1. Do you act as though if you ignore a task it will go away?  
   Yes □  No □
2. Do you underestimate the work involved in the task?  
   □  □
3. Do you overestimate your abilities and resources in relation to a task?  
   □  □
4. Do you deceive yourself into believing that a mediocre performance or lesser standards are acceptable?  
   □  □
5. Do you deceive yourself by substituting one worthy activity for another?  
   □  □
6. Do you believe that repeated “minor” delays are harmless?  
   □  □
7. Do you dramatize a commitment to a task rather than actually doing it?  
   □  □
8. Do you persevere on only one portion of a task?  
   □  □
9. Do you become paralyzed in deciding between alternative choices?  
   □  □

HOW TO SET GOALS FOR MYSELF

Your life is yours to shape and direct as you see fit through your personal values. You really can do much more and grow much more than you think you can once you make a decision and commitment to do it!

To have a chance of success, a goal should have the following qualities:

- **ACHIEVABLE**: do I have the time, energy, and ability to do this?
- **NOT DEPENDENT**: goals which rely on the cooperation of others or on conditions (such as the weather) are more risky than those I can accomplish on my own
- **BELIEVABLE**: do I have the self-confidence that I can really do this?
- **MEASURABLE**: so I will be able to see the actual progress or be able to tell if I actually achieve it; this will give me a lot of motivation and encouragement
- **“WANTABLE”**: do I really want this, or is it one of those hundreds of other things I feel I should do? (i.e., perhaps put on me by expectations of someone else)
- **WITHOUT ALTERNATIVE**: either/or goals divide my energy and attention, and also give me a chance to “cop out”
- **NOT INJURIOUS**: to myself or others
- **IMPORTANT**: does it line up with my important values, or is it a trivial idea that means nothing to me?
Steps Toward Procrastination Recovery

- Improving Time Management
  - Plan ahead by identifying and clarifying your priorities.
    - For Example: 1. To do well in school
      2. To get my degree
      3. To get a good job
    - Make SPECIFIC behavioral goals— Put them in your planner!
  - Break down goals into manageable ones— this makes them less overwhelming. Start by knowing how much time you need for each goal.

- List the benefits of completing each task. Identify how that task fits with your priorities.

- Reward yourself for completing a set of tasks.

- When time management alone doesn’t work, ask yourself:
  - Did I procrastinate on planning my week?
  - Am I still running out of time?

- Many focus on what is left to do, rather than what has been accomplished.
  - Acknowledge your accomplishments
  - Give yourself rewards for completing tasks

- Create a good study environment.
  - Free of distractions
  - Free of clutter
  - Not answering the door or phone (especially if you can’t say “NO”)

Example of ineffective goal-setting
- Read chem. assignment
- Study for chem. test

Example of effective goal-setting
- Read pp. 24-35 on Tues. @ 3pm
- Read pp. 36-47 on Wed. @ 10am
- Review and revise notes after class
- Develop study questions after each review
♦ Challenge negative thoughts.

Examples of **self-defeating thoughts**
- “I’ll never get an A”
- “I’m no good at Chemistry”
- “This is SO boring”

Examples of more **positive thoughts**
- “I’ll do the best I can”
- “Chemistry is not my best subject”
- “This will help me achieve my goals”

♦ Identify messages you’ve learned, and how they might affect the way you view and feel about yourself.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Message</th>
<th>How the message may affect you</th>
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<td>“A ‘B’ is fine, but what didn’t you get an ‘A’?”</td>
<td>May make you feel that you’re not good enough.</td>
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<td>“You can do whatever you set your mind to.”</td>
<td>May make you wonder, “What if I can’t?”</td>
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♦ Consider counseling.

- If you are having personal problems that are interfering with your motivation
- If your expectations are unreasonable (e.g., are your expectations so high that they are causing you stress and anxiety?); if so, you need to modify them
- If your self-worth (or other people’s admiration) depends on being perfect

♦ Know what success means to you not to others. Set your own criteria for success.

♦ Recall previous successes. Focus on what is finished, not what is left to do.

♦ View failure as an opportunity for new learning.

♦ Find the middle ground between “I can’t” and “It has to be perfect.”
Nine Time-Making Tips

1. Learn to say "NO," remember your priorities. If a task or opportunity presents itself that will help you accomplish a high-priority task, then take it. But all other tasks/opportunities will detract from the resources (time, energy, effort, etc.) available for you to accomplish your goals. Cut down on lower priority commitments (favors, activities, etc.) until you have more resources at your disposal.

2. Choose high-priority tasks first, no matter how tempting it might be to address a more enjoyable or easier low-priority task. This is not to say that you can’t take a break from a high priority task (e.g., studying) to do a low-priority task (e.g., cleaning), but there should be limits on the time spent “off task.”

3. Build time into your schedule for interruptions/breaks/unforeseen problems. These are part of life, and if you don’t anticipate some “slippage,” you might be tempted to give up on your schedule (e.g., “Well, today’s shot already, no sense in trying to keep the plan...”).

4. Use stress management techniques on a daily basis. Like time management, stress management involves a lifestyle change, and each makes the other easier.

5. There are times when you’ll be bored/daydreaming, etc. First task is to become aware that this is happening (at first these times might be hard to identify, but with practice, you can catch yourself when you’re wandering), next task is to use time productively. Sometimes it means refocusing on the task at hand. Other times it means abandoning that task for now (returning back to it at first opportunity if it’s a high priority task), and using that time to make a list, make plans, break down a task, etc.

6. Set limits on TV, pleasure reading, playing, socializing, etc. It is important not to deprive yourself of life’s pleasures, but be sure to set a time limit AND STICK TO IT!

7. Be aware of your top distractions and when you’re working on a high-priority task, limit your access to these temptations. Catch the impulse and defer it until break time.

8. Stop expecting perfection. One of the main causes for procrastination is not wanting to get started on something until you can do it either: 1) all at once, or 2) exactly the way you want to. When you're trying to do a high priority task, the important thing is to “just do it!” Get started, get the momentum working for you, instead of against you, and build on what you’ve started.

9. Finally, it’s important to review your schedule at the end of the week. Look back on how much you did get done and reward yourself. Also look back on what you could have done better and think of how to improve on them. Review your TO DO list daily—adding, deleting, or re-prioritizing as needed.
## MY WEEKLY SCHEDULE

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Don’t lose time if you get a little stressed...  

**SPEEDY** Stress Management Techniques

- **S**mile or make a funny face. Find something to laugh about.
- **P**lace your hand on a soft, fuzzy, or squeezing stress ball.
- **E**nhance your environment by humming a tune or letting out a sigh.
- **D**o the 5-minute break technique. Find some quiet time for yourself.
- **Y**et to friends or colleagues who can understand your frustrations.

As you inhale, think about breathing in healthy, calming, cleansing air. As you exhale, visualize yourself breaking out tension and stress into the room.

As yourself, “Is this really something I should get upset about? Will it matter tomorrow... in a week... in a month?”

Take a slow, deep breath in through your nose, pause for 3 seconds, then breathe out as slowly as you can through your mouth.

Count to 3 before you say, think or do anything.

Close your eyes and imagine you are in a peaceful place.

Get up and move around or walk for a minute, if standing. Improve your surroundings.

Shake your arms and/or legs. Stretch your neck and shoulders.

Use progressive muscle relaxation techniques: tense every muscle group, hold, then relax.

Get or give a hug.

Splash some cold water on your face. Get some fresh air.
Self Talk that Interferes with Being Organized

When confronted with the decision to be organized or not, you engage in a little talk with yourself. In the list below, you will find some of the statements you might say to convince yourself not to be or stay organized. These statements lead to the conclusion, “I will not take action to be or stay organized now.” However, the statements are not always true, rational, or realistic ways to describe your situation. Learning to identify your ineffective self-talk will lead to more self-motivation, less procrastination, and better study attitudes. When you hear yourself saying or thinking the thoughts below— CHECK THEM or you’re headed for trouble.

Dispelling the Top 7 Myths about Being Organized

There are a lot of myths going around when it comes to getting and staying organized. Here are the top 7, along with the truths.

**MYTH 1: BEING ORGANIZED MEANS BEING NEAT.**

While you can certainly be neat and organized, the two terms should never be confused with each other. While you might have “neat” piles of, or “neat” boxes piled on top of each other, or objects lined “neatly” in a straight line, you may still not be able to find a single thing when you need it. Being organized means you’re using a structured system that allows you to find everything you need when you need it, and you get everything done when it’s due—without frustration, chaos, or stress.

**MYTH 2: TO BE ORGANIZED IS TO BE CLEAN.**

Once again, while you can be BOTH organized AND clean, those terms should not be confused. Cleaning means you’re removing dirt, grime, and otherwise preparing a sanitary surface. But, you can have the cleanest hope or office on the block and still be disorganized.

**MYTH 3: TO BE ORGANIZED MEANS TO SCHEDULE EVERY MINUTE OF YOUR DAY.**

While schedule appointments, projects you need to complete, chores, etc. is highly recommended, you certainly do not have to schedule every moment of your day to be organized.

‘Scheduling is the fine art of packing every day JUST FULL ENOUGH of the most useful activities.’ Never overload it. Your schedule should always allow you time for spontaneity.

**MYTH 4: ONLY CERTAIN TYPES OF PEOPLE CAN BE ORGANIZED.**

While there are a very small percentage of people who “don’t have the ability” to be organized, such as someone with a serious illness, most people CAN be organized. Being disorganized is not a disease, it is a decision. If you truly want to be organized, there are proven systems to help you. Once you know these systems and apply them to every day of your life, you will be organized.

**MYTH 5: BEING ORGANIZED TAKES LOTS OF TIME AND EFFORT.**

The truth is, it takes a lot less time and effort to be organized than it does to be disorganized. Disorganization takes more time than you can imagine and ensures that large obstacles are always directly in the path of “getting things done.” Getting and staying organized is not rocket-science. The systems and ideas, once learned, applied, and practiced, can become as simple as brushing your teeth or combing your hair.

**MYTH 6: EVERYONE I KNOW IS ORGANIZED, EXCEPT ME.**

Beware of this myth. Being organized is both an outer and inner trait. Unless you really know a person well, you really can’t come to this conclusion. For example, someone may have a very neat home, but she is never on time. Another person may have an organized home, but his office filing system is out of control. Yet another person may have an organized home and office, but never reaches any of her goals. You are not alone. There are many, many people in the world who need help getting organized in certain areas of their lives—even if it doesn’t seem so on the surface.

**MYTH 7: ORGANIZED PEOPLE HAVE NO FUN.**

On the contrary, the people who are organized are getting the very best out of life. They are getting things done. They’re achieving their goals. They’re not wasting time searching for lost items, or re-doing things, or missing appointments. They’re finding the time they need to do the things they love, and to spend time with the people they care about.

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