

Time Management

This is the allocation, monitoring and evaluation of the time spent on activities. The goal is to maximize productivity by minimizing the time spent to complete the activity. The people who succeed in the future will be those who best manage their time. To manage your time, you would want to examine what you do with your time daily or weekly. For instance you may ask:

- What are my goals?
- What are my priorities?
- What are my main activities?
- How much time do I allocate to each activity?
- How do I record the time spent on activities?
- How do record interruption times?
- I need to keep my time data handy.

To manage your time well you need to understand how you are spending your time now. As a starting point, classify your activities into major categories and record the time spent on each activity. There are fixed and flexible activities. For example, as a student, class time, sleeping or bed time, meals time and job time are fixed. However, time for study, homework, social events, visits, friends, and relaxation are largely flexible. For example, activities may be classified as follows:

- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Wake-up time | 2. Grooming times |
| 3. Meal times | 4. Class times |
| 5. Study times | 6. Job/Work times |
| 7. Travel times | 8. Recreation times |
| 9. Social/religious times | 10. Bed time |

Analyze and evaluate the time duration on each activity to assess its reasonableness. Then make necessary adjustments. It is a good idea to review activity priority daily. Vilfredo Pareto noted that 80 percent of reward comes from 20 percent of effort. In prioritization, it is necessary to isolate and identify that valuable 20 percent. Always include some “slack” time into your time schedule so as to handle interruptions. A to-do list may be prepared for each day. This is quite handy! In preparing a To-do-list, activities should be prioritized. Note that routine activities often occur at definite times which can be regarded as fixed times. The other activities can then be classified as indicated in Table 1. Urgency is conditioned on due dates and deadlines. The closer the deadline or due date of a task or assignment, the more urgent it is. Importance is judged by the relative effect an activity will have on an outcome or the relative cost of failing in the activity.

	Important	Not-important
Urgent	1	2
Not-urgent	3	4

Table 1: Activity priority classified

- | | |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| 1 – Highest priority | 2 – Normal priority |
| 3 – Low priority | 4 – Not a priority |

Effective time management may be achieved through:

- Having everything in its place (desktop, room, office, cabinets)
- Using a To-do list
- Avoiding procrastination, just do it now
- Reading selectively
- Managing interruptions
- Delegating tasks, teamwork
- Maintaining a trash can

Time may be wasted by the following means:

- Misplacing things
- Procrastinating
- Task switching
- Never saying no
- Reading everything
- Doing everything yourself

Time management is very important. When we manage time well, we achieve more; meet deadlines; have more free time; and lead a balanced and less stressful life. Your self-esteem will be high and you will not doubt your ability to perform or achieve desired goals in life.

13 Tips for More Effective Time Management

[by Kathy Prochaska-Cue, Extension Family Economics Specialist](#)

1. SPEND SOME TIME PLANNING AND ORGANIZING. Using time to think and plan is time well-spent. In fact, if you fail to take time for planning, you are, in effect, planning to fail. Organize in a way that makes sense to you. If you need color and pictures, use a lot on your calendar or planning book. Some people need to have papers filed away; others get their creative energy from their piles. So forget the "shoulds" and organize your way.

2. SET GOALS. Goals give your life, and the way you spend your time, direction. When asked the secret to amassing such a fortune, one of the famous Hunt brothers from Texas replied: "First you've got to decide what you want." Set goals which are specific, measurable, realistic and achievable. Your optimum goals are those which cause you to "stretch" but not "break" as you strive for achievement. Goals can give creative people a much-needed sense of direction.

3. PRIORITIZE. Use the 80-20 Rule originally stated by the Italian economist Vilfredo Pareto who noted that 80 percent of the reward comes from 20 percent of the effort. The trick to prioritizing is to isolate and identify that valuable 20 percent. Once identified, prioritize time to concentrate your work on those items with the greatest reward. Prioritize by color, number or letter — whichever method makes the most sense to you. Flagging items with a deadline is another idea for helping you stick to your priorities.

4. USE A TO DO LIST. Some people thrive using a daily To Do list which they construct either the last thing the previous day or first thing in the morning. Such people may combine a To Do list with a calendar or schedule. Others prefer a "running" To Do list which is continuously being updated. Or, you may prefer a combination of the two previously described To Do lists. Whatever method works is best for you. Don't be afraid to try a new system — you just might find one that works even better than your present one!

5. BE FLEXIBLE. Allow time for interruptions and distractions. Time management experts often suggest planning for just 50 percent or less of one's time. With only 50 percent of your time planned, you will have the flexibility to handle interruptions and the unplanned "emergency." When you expect to be interrupted, schedule routine tasks. Save (or make) larger blocks of time for your priorities. When interrupted, ask Alan Lakein's crucial question, "What is the most important thing I can be doing with my time right now?" to help you get back on track fast.

6. CONSIDER YOUR BIOLOGICAL PRIME TIME. That's the time of day when you are at your best. Are you a "morning person," a "night owl," or a late afternoon "whiz?" Knowing when your best time is and planning to use that time of day for your priorities (if possible) is effective time management.

7. DO THE RIGHT THING RIGHT. Noted management expert, Peter Drucker, says "doing the right thing is more important than doing things right." Doing the right thing is effectiveness; doing things right is efficiency. Focus first on effectiveness (identifying what is the right thing to do), then concentrate on efficiency (doing it right).

8. ELIMINATE THE URGENT. Urgent tasks have short-term consequences while important tasks are those with long-term, goal-related implications. Work towards reducing the urgent things you must do so you'll have time for your important priorities. Flagging or highlighting items on your To Do list or attaching a deadline to each item may help keep important items from becoming urgent emergencies.

9. PRACTICE THE ART OF INTELLIGENT NEGLECT. Eliminate from your life trivial tasks or those tasks which do not have long-term consequences for you. Can you delegate or eliminate any of your To Do list? Work on those tasks which you alone can do.

10. AVOID BEING A PERFECTIONIST. In the Malaysian culture, only the gods are considered capable of producing anything perfect. Whenever something is made, a flaw is left on purpose so the gods will not be offended. Yes, some things need to be closer to perfect than others, but perfectionism, paying unnecessary attention to detail, can be a form of procrastination.

11. CONQUER PROCRASTINATION. One technique to try is the "Swiss cheese" method described by Alan Lakein. When you are avoiding something, break it into smaller tasks and do just one of the smaller tasks or set a timer and work on the big task for just 15 minutes. By doing a little at a time, eventually you'll reach a point where you'll want to finish.

12. LEARN TO SAY "NO." Such a small word — and so hard to say. Focusing on your goals may help. Blocking time for important, but often not scheduled, priorities such as family and friends can also help. But first you must be convinced that you and your priorities are important — that seems to be the hardest part in learning to say "no." Once convinced of their importance, saying "no" to the unimportant in life gets easier.

13. REWARD YOURSELF. Even for small successes, celebrate achievement of goals. Promise yourself a reward for completing each task, or finishing the total job. Then keep your promise to yourself and indulge in your reward. Doing so will help you maintain the necessary balance in life between work and play. As Ann McGee-Cooper says, "If we learn to balance excellence in work with excellence in play, fun, and relaxation, our lives become happier, healthier, and a great deal more creative."

Time Management *By George Mason University*

1. A Personal Time Survey

To begin managing your time, you need a clear idea of how you use your time presently. An accurate estimate for weekly activities can be obtained if you keep track of how you spend your time for a week. This will help you get a better idea of how much time you have available for personal study. It will also help you identify your time wasters. However, for now, the Personal Time Survey (Table 2) will help you to estimate how much time you currently spend in typical activities. In the survey, estimate the amount of time spent on each item. Then add up the times used and subtract the total from 168 hrs. The difference is the time available for your personal study in one week.

Activity	Time Spent (hr)
1. Bed time per night	_____ X 7 = _____
2. Grooming hours per day	_____ X 7 = _____
3. Time for meals/snacks per day - include preparation time	_____ X 7 = _____
4. Total travel time per day in weekdays	_____ X 5 = _____
5. Total travel time weekends	
6. Time for social and religious activities (clubs, church, hang-outs, dates, etc.)	
7. Time per day for chores, errands, extra grooming, etc.	_____ X 7 = _____
8. Work hours per week	
9. Class/Lab. hours per week	
10. Time for miscellaneous activities (Recreation, etc). Be honest!	
Total weekly activities time	
<i>Available weekly study time</i>	168 - _____ = _____

Table 2: Personal time survey

2. Study Hour Formula

You need to know the total semester credit hour you are enrolled in and determine how many hours of study time you need. Each course should be analyzed and classified based on the anticipated level of challenge. This is going to be a highly personalized classification. As a guide, three levels of challenge, namely difficult (D), normal (N), and easy (E) are suggested. Use Table 3 to record your courses and challenge levels.

Course Label	Course Title	Credit Hours	Challenge Level*		
			D	N	E
	Add up hours				

Table 3: Credit hours and challenge levels

To determine how many hours you need to study each week to get A's, use the following rule of thumb. Allow 1 to 2 study hours per 1 hour credit for an easy course, 2 to 3 study hours per 1 hour credit for a regular course, and 3 to 4 study hours per 1 hour credit for a difficult course. For example, Orientation 111 is a relatively easy 1 hour credit course. Usually, a person would not do more than 2 hours of work outside of class per week for this course. Advanced calculus is usually considered a difficult course, so it might be best to allocate 12 hours of study a week for this course. If more hours are needed, take away some hours from easier courses, and add them to those for the more difficult courses. Figure out the time that you need to study by using the above formula for each of your courses: Table 4.

Type of Course	Credit Hours	Study Time Estimate
Easy(E)		x 2 =
Normal (N)		x 3 =
Difficult (D)		x 4 =
Total weekly study time		

Table 4: Weekly study time requirement

Compare the total weekly study time from Table 4 to the total available weekly time from Table 3. Some students might find themselves a bit stressed, especially when the required study time exceeds the available time. Clearly some adjustments must be made in such situations. However, remember that it is not only the quantity of study time but also its quality that matters. Table 3 is a general guideline! Try it for a week, and make adjustments as needed.

3. Daily Schedules

There are a variety of time schedules that can fit your personality. These include engagement books, a piece of poster board tacked to a wall, or 3 x 5 cards. Once you decide upon the style, the next step is construction. It is best to allow spaces for each hour, half-hours for a busy schedule. First, put down all of the necessities; classes, work, meals, etc. Now block in your study time (remember the study time formula presented earlier). Schedule it for a time when you are energized. Also, it's best to review class notes soon after class. Make sure to schedule in study breaks, about 10 minutes each hour. Be realistic on how many courses to take. To succeed in your courses you need to have the time to study. If you find you don't have time to study and you're not socializing to an extreme, you might want to consider lightening your load. Tips for Saving Time Now that you know how you spend most of your time, take a look at it. Think about what your most important things are. Do you have enough time? Chances are that you do not. Below are some tips on how to schedule and budget your time when it seems you just don't have enough.

4. Don't be a perfectionist

Trying to be a perfect person sets you up for defeat. Nobody can be perfect. Difficult tasks usually result in avoidance and procrastination. You need to set achievable goals, but they should also be challenging. There will always be people both weaker and stronger than you.

5. Learn to say no

For example, an acquaintance of yours would like you to see a movie with him tonight. You made social plans for tomorrow with your friends and tonight you were going to study and do laundry. You really are not interested. You want to say no, but you hate turning people down. Politely saying no should become a habit. Saying no frees up time for the things that are most important.

6. Learn to Prioritize

Prioritizing your responsibilities and engagements is very important. Some people do not know how to prioritize and become procrastinators. A "to do list" places items in order of importance. One method is the ABC list. This list is divided into three sections; a, b, or c. The items placed

in the A section are those needed to be done that day. The items placed in the B section need completion within the week. The C section items are those things that need to be done within the month. As the B, C items become more pertinent they are bumped up to the A or B list. Try it or come up with your own method, but do it.

7. Combine several activities

Another suggestion is to combine several activities into one time spot. While commuting to school, listen to taped notes. This allows up to an hour or two a day of good study review. While showering make a mental list of the things that need to be done. When you watch a sitcom, laugh as you pay your bills. These are just suggestions of what you can do to combine your time, but there are many others, above all be creative, and let it work for you.

8. Conclusion

After scheduling becomes a habit, then you can adjust it. It's better to be precise at first. It is easier to find something to do with extra time than to find extra time to do something. Most importantly, make it work for you. A time schedule that is not personalized and honest is not a time schedule at all.