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Time Management Strategies

*Ferrett (2008) p. 90*

Use the following strategies to improve your time-management skills and to help you achieve your goals in a balanced and effective way.

1. Keep a calendar.

An inexpensive, pocket-size calendar is easy to carry with you and handy for scheduling commitments, such as classes, labs, and work for the entire semester.

* **Each week…**review your calendar each week and list top priorities, due dates, and important school, work, and family activities.
* **Every day…**each day review urgent priorities that must be done by a deadline, such as paying fees, dropping a class, returning a library book, paying taxes, etc.
1. Create a daily to-do list.

Some people like to write a to-do list for the next day, taking some time at the end of a day to review briefly what they want to focus on for the next day. Others like to write their list in the morning at breakfast or when they first get to school or work.

* **Create your list…**list the tasks you need to accomplish during the day and map them out on a daily calendar.
* **Prioritize your tasks…**you may want to circle or place a number one by the more important priority to make sure it gets done that day.
1. Do the tough tasks first.

You will feel a sense of accomplishment as you tackle your tough tasks first. Start out with your most difficult subjects, while you’re fresh and alert. For instance, if you are avoiding your statistics homework because it is difficult, get up early and do it before your classes begin. Start projects when they are assigned. Don’t procrastinate.

1. ![C:\Users\epettij2\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\6ZJTVFKX\MP900400507[1].jpg]()Break projects into smaller tasks.

Begin by seeing the whole project or each chapter as part of a larger system. Then break it into manageable chunks. You will be amazed at how much less intimidating it is to accomplish the smaller tasks versus trying to tackle the whole project all at once.

1. Consolidate similar tasks.

If you group similar tasks, you can maximize your efforts. For example, if you need to make several phone calls, make them all at a specific time and reduce interruptions. Set aside a block of time to shop, pay bills, and run errands. Try to answer emails at designated times, rather than as each one comes in.

1. Study at your high-energy time.

Know your body rhythms and study your hardest subjects during your high-energy time.

1. Study everywhere and anywhere.

Ideally, you should choose a regular study location that has few distractions, such as the library. However, you should always be prepared to study everywhere and anywhere, as you never know when you might get some unexpected down time.

* Carry note cards with you to review formulas, dates, definitions, facts, and important data.
* Bring class notes or a book with you to review during the 5 or 10 minutes of waiting between classes, for the bus, in line at the grocery store, or for appointments.
1. Study in short segments throughout the day.

Studying in short segments is much more effective than studying in marathon sessions. Your brain is much more receptive to recall information when you review in short sessions at various times.

1. Get organized.

Think of the time you waste looking for items (and the unnecessary stress it causes). Lay out your clothes the night before, put your keys on the same hook, put your backpack by the door, put you mail and assignments in the same space, and keep records of bills and grades and transcripts.

* **Tip…**Keep a box with tests, papers, and projects. If you need to negotiate a grade, you will have the background support you will need.
1. Be flexible, patient, and persistent.

Don’t try to make too many changes at once, and don’t get discouraged if a strategy doesn’t work for you. You are striving for excellence, not perfection. Change certain aspects until a strategy fits your style. If it works, do it. If not, try something new. Just make sure you’ve given yourself at least 30 days to develop new habits.

1. Realize that you can’t do it all (or at least right now).

You may feel overwhelmed by too many demands and determine that some tasks are better done by others around you. This does not mean you can offload your responsibilities onto others, but focus on your important priorities and say no to activities that don’t support your goals. Consider delegating certain tasks, joining a club later in the year, or participating in a fundraiser when you are on school break. Do social activities, return phone calls, and visit with friends when you have completed your top priority tasks.

Office of First Year Experience & Transfer Student Connections

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**Common Time Wasters for College Students**

Hanging out with friends/family • Facebook • MySpace • Texting • Video games

Laziness (or lack of motivation) • Television shows • Concerts • Partying • Sleeping too much • Talking on the phone • Lack of planning • Movies • Surfing the internet Shopping • Computer games • Email • Visitors • Not getting enough sleep
Having the inability to say “no”