

# Time Management

Here's the deal with Time Management: Most of us don't *think* about it until we've hit a snag, or hit the wall, or have just plain run out of time. This usually happens during exam week, or when we have a big assignment or paper due. By then, we're so pressed for time that we feel we don't *have time* to dedicate to constructing a plan.

The funny thing is, when the crunch period passes, we go back to having "all the time in the world" and we *still* don't develop a time management plan.

No matter where you are in this cycle, you will always benefit from making the time to get organized, and create a time management plan.

## What is Time Management?

Time management is everything that helps you plan for and effectively:

- Set aside enough time to study
- Avoid having to cram for tests
- Keep up-to-date with assignments
- Overcome procrastination
- Balance study time and personal time
- Create a study schedule and stick to it

Time management is not just about carefully documenting your time and commitments and then following a strict routine. It's not about making you a perfectly efficient person (or robot) either. The point of time management is that when you are good at it, your life and your successes *get easier*.

Studies have shown that Time Management has the strongest correlation with a student's overall success in a course. In other words, the more you manage your time, the better your chances of getting good grades.

## What happens when you *don't* have a plan?

You can miss important assignments, turn in work late, and get behind in your studies. This leads to cramming for tests and brings on a lot of unnecessary pressure. It causes anxiety. It makes you feel frustrated with yourself and with school. It can even bring on feelings of guilt and disappointment – especially when you're procrastinating.

## Why should you care about time management?

If you haven't found yourself in a time pinch yet, it's inevitable that it will happen at some point if you're not practicing time management principals. When this happens, your stress levels skyrocket, your grades can suffer, and your career success can be jeopardized.

Another huge benefit is that time management helps you identify activities that *waste your time*, giving you back more free time to do whatever you want.

The thing about Time Management is that it isn't hard to do, and it doesn't take long to implement on a daily basis. All it takes is an initial investment to discover how you spend your time now, and a plan for how you can *better* spend your time for success.

Let's get to it!

## Awareness

How are you currently spending your time? How much study time do you have available on a daily basis?

Login to Campus ToolKit and try our quick exercise to see how much time you have in a day. These are located under the Tools menu. You might be surprised when you see how much time is allocated for the many things going on in your life.

**The time you have leftover is the amount of study time you have available.**

How did you do? Can you see where this schedule might change during the weeks leading up to an exam? Each semester, your schedule will change depending on your course load, extra curricular activities, and work schedule. Later, we'll give you guidelines on how much time to spend studying. For now, print the results of this exercise, and keep reading.

## When Time Management Fails

Before you start on your Time Management plan, there are a few pitfalls to avoid.

### Inflexibility

It's tempting to plan your time to the minute, or prepare a daily schedule and apply it to the entire semester. Ideally, this *should* work, but in reality it never does. A flexible schedule is more likely to work in the "real world."

## Starting when you're behind

If you are designing your time management plan in response to falling behind, you're most likely going to have to place heavy time expectations on yourself in order to catch up. Remember that this is only temporary – so be sure to revisit your new plan after the pressure has eased to make adjustments, and add more preparation time to avoid falling behind in the future.

## Creating the “ideal” plan, that doesn't work for YOU!

Your time management plan has to work with your personality. A plan that works well for one student might be impossible for another.

If you haven't already, now is a great time to complete the assessments available to you on Campus ToolKit. Knowing your personality type, taking a Sensory Learning Style assessment, and taking the Paragon Learning Style Inventory (PLSI) gives you a tremendous advantage when it comes to creating a Time Management plan that works for you.

Rather than trying to change your personality to manage your time a certain way, you're better off managing your time in a way that works with your personality and learning style.

## Taking control of your time

When it comes to your schedule, it's important to remember that **you** are the one who is in control. Think of your schedule as a tool that guides you, and not as a law that has to be abided by. Flexibility is key to time management, and how much flexibility you want is up to you!

A good way to look at your schedule is like a time map, with all of your commitments clearly laid out in front of you. How you get to them is your choice.

Part of taking control is taking responsibility for your time, and accepting that you may have to change some of your habits and behaviors. After you've completed your time schedule, we'll help you form new habits.

## Know yourself!

Time Management is very personal, and you can personalize the way your schedule works. For example, you can decide how much flexibility you want in your schedule. If you enjoy making lists and ticking off completed tasks, you might like a more rigid time schedule to give you a sense of accomplishment. If

you prefer to leave your possibilities open, you might want a less rigid schedule — maybe just a to-do list to keep on track.

## Estimating your time

Your new time management plan starts by estimating the time you are currently spending per week on activities and commitments. We've developed an interactive weekly schedule to help you estimate. Log in to Campus ToolKit to do the estimator. When you're finished, print or save the results.

## Tracking time

Now that you have estimated your time, it's important to actually track your time for the next week to see how your estimate compares to your actual time spent. Tracking your time is important if you sometimes wonder where time has gone. It also helps when determining whether you generally under or over-estimate the time needed to complete a task.

Print our weekly time log, and for the next week, keep a log of your time on an hourly basis. When you're finished, you'll use this information to adjust your new schedule.

## Over-Estimators and Under-Estimators

Most of us can't predict with total accuracy how much time something is going to take. We can, however, learn our own tendencies and budget our time accordingly.

### Under-Estimators

If you find that you continually under-estimate the amount of time a job will take, then you need to learn to add time to your estimates.

Some people are optimists by nature, and tend to think things will be easier or take less time than they do. If that's you, learn how much time you are actually spending on tasks by logging your time. When you see these actual figures, re-arrange your schedule accordingly.

When estimating time for new tasks, assignments, or courses, decide how much time you think they will take, and double it! This doubled figure is usually far closer to the actual figure than your first optimistic guess.

If you double the amount of time you think tasks will take, you may schedule more time than you actually need. However, while you are learning better time