

Being With Time

“Just because you have always done something the same way does not mean that it is the most effective, efficient method.” -Blackett and Weiss

Rationale: Expectations in college are often different than they were in high school. As a college student you will devote more time and energy to independent learning. Since you are more accountable for managing your own time, it is important to explore how you spend your time. Begin by defining obstacles and challenges to your time management. Next, identify strengths and tools to manage your time more effectively. Finally, create and implement useful strategies that allow you to take more control of your life.

Learn when to say YES and when to say NO!

- To maintain balance say No to some things. (What are some things that are hard for you to say no to?)
- Say Yes to some things (What are some things you want to be sure to leave time to do and enjoy?)
- Until you have a good handle on your academic and personal life in college, less is better!

Time management tools: What tools do you use to manage your time?

Examples: Planner, PDA, calendar, lists, syllabi, notebooks, binders, post-it notes, alarms, cell phone, memory?

Plan ahead (pick specific times of the day and week to do this)

- A little planning saves a lot of time and energy in the long run.
- Planning allows you to anticipate what is coming next.
- Planning leaves less up to fate and chance and leaves room for the unexpected.
- Planning can help you to avoid *procrastinating*, which is habitually putting off things that you ‘should’ be doing.

A word on procrastination: The first step is to change your language. Instead of saying the words ‘*have to*’ begin to say ‘*want to*’. When you say ‘*have to*’, your subconscious mind starts rationalizing reasons that it *does not have to*, thus creating an unconscious battle within us. In fact, you don’t ‘*have to*’ do anything in this world except eventually die. Almost all else can be a conscious choice.

Examples:

I *want* to complete my paper by 3:00, so I have time to visit the writing center for editing advice. I *want* to create a time management system, so I can reduce some of my stress and have more time to do the things that I want to do.

Create a scheduled study time and study space.

In order to ensure you do not allow other ‘stuff’ to take over your potential study time, establishing a routine will allow a maximum amount of time for ‘stuff’ later. When something becomes routine, it takes less energy. At first it will take time to discipline yourself away from short-term rewards in favor of long-term benefits. With practice you can train your brain to know, ‘now is the time to focus and absorb knowledge.’

- When are your scheduled study times?
- What do you need in an ideal study space?
- When are you at your best for studying?
- Can you agree to meet with a roommate or classmate to hold each other accountable for studying?

Time Management Principles

"The only reason for time is so that everything doesn't happen at once." -Albert Einstein

1. **Identify your "Best Time" for studying:** Everyone has high and low periods of attention and concentration. Are you a "morning person" or a "night person"? Use your power times to study; use the down times for routines such as laundry and errands.
2. **Study difficult subjects first:** When you are fresh, you can process information more quickly, resulting in time saved.
3. **Use distributed learning and practice:** Study in short time blocks with short breaks between. This keeps you from getting fatigued and wasting time. This type of studying is efficient; your brain is still processing information while you take a break.
4. **Make sure your surroundings are conducive to studying:** This will allow you to reduce distractions which can "waste time." If there are times in the residence halls or your apartment when you know there will be noise and commotion, use that time for mindless tasks.
5. **Make room for entertainment and relaxation:** College is more than studying. It is healthy to have a social and co-curricular life in addition to your academic life.
6. **Make sure you have time to sleep and eat properly:** Sleep is often an activity (or lack of activity) that students use as their time management "bank." When they need a few extra hours for studying or socializing, they withdraw a few hours of sleep. Doing this makes the time they spend studying less effective because they will need a couple hours of clock time to get an hour of productive time.
7. **Try to combine activities:** Use the "Twofer" concept. If you are spending time at the laundromat, bring your psychology notes to study. If you are waiting in line for tickets to the REM concert, bring your biology flashcards to memorize.

SO...are you using time wisely?

Are you always behind and trying to catch up?

Do you make written to-do lists every day?

Do you prioritize your list?

Do you avoid striving for perfection on tasks that don't require it?

Do you have time for yourself?

Do you set realistic deadlines for yourself?

Do you break large projects into smaller, more manageable chunks?

Do you leave for appointments 10 minutes early?

Do you schedule work/jobs that are less enjoyable between enjoyable ones?

Do you carry books or small projects with you to be productive during unexpected waiting times?

Do you take advantage of bits and pieces of time that become available during the day?

Have you started a lot of projects you can't seem to complete?

Do you reward yourself when you have managed your time well?