

TAKE YOUR TIME

Time Management



Do any of these statements sound familiar to you? Do any describe you at different points throughout the semester? Can you think of circumstances when you may have used one of the following as a response to completing your class work or fulfilling commitments?

- It's hard for me to get to class and work on time.
- My friends get frustrated with me because I'm often late when we have plans.
- I can't seem to get started on a paper or a project until the last minute, even though I have been aware of the deadline or due date.
- My work is not my best effort and I make mistakes that I could have avoided if I wasn't rushing.
- It just takes me longer to do things than I imagine they will take.
- It's hard for me to leave extra time in case something unforeseen comes up that causes a delay in my schedule – like traffic or bad weather.
- I feel like I have too many things to manage and not enough time.
- On the weekends, I just want to relax, but then things pile-up and I'm playing catch up all week.
- I actually feel stressed out and frustrated with myself.
- I don't want to live this way anymore, but I don't know how to change.



These descriptions are common among students, as well as others. Many students experience the difficulties of managing their own time during their first year of college. For many students this includes: scheduling time for classes, labs, study time/course reading, working on papers and projects, preparing for exams, work, sports/going to the gym, time for clubs/organizations, spending time with friends, family responsibilities, significant others, financial obligations (such as bill-paying and balancing the checkbook), errands, laundry, cleaning, doctor and other appointments, eating, sleeping, grooming, commuting, religious/faith involvement, and relaxation. This is a lot to manage! Many students have had the assistance of parents, coaches, guardians, or mentors in scheduling their time and responsibilities prior to coming to college. But faced with managing all of these responsibilities for the first time, coming to college can feel frustrating and overwhelming.

HERE ARE SOME TIPS THAT CAN HELP:

Academic Skills Time Management

- ***Use a planner – either paper or electronic format.*** Put major events, including exams, papers, and presentations on your planner. This will help you organize your day and see upcoming deadlines.
- ***Make a “To-Do List” each day.*** This can help you prioritize what has to get done.
- ***Plan for major papers and projects by breaking them down into small segments and putting each segment on your planner over the course of several weeks.*** This will help you feel less overwhelmed and give you ample time to do your best work and make revisions.
- ***Have a regular time set aside each day for studying and course reading.*** Schedule it as though it were a class and make it a priority to attend. This will keep you current in your courses and help you to learn well and avoid cramming at midterms and finals.
- ***Be aware of your time wasters.*** Keep track of how much time you are actually spending on socializing, television, internet use, or gaming. Decide how much daily time you want to devote to these and other activities that may interfere with your academic and professional responsibilities, rather than allowing time to get away from you.
- ***Try a 10 minute “jumpstart” to a dreaded activity.*** For example, if you’ve scheduled to work on a small segment of your research paper, but can’t seem to get motivated, just tell yourself to do it for 10 minutes. Give yourself permission to stop



after the 10 minutes. Often, you may find yourself engaged after 10 minutes and decide to keep going – even just for another 10 minutes. Every little bit helps toward your goal. Ten or twenty minutes each day of work on a project over several weeks is still less stressful than a 6-8 hour exhausting marathon the night before it's due!

Personal Skills Time Management

- **Designate a spot in your home or dorm that is your “place to land” when you come in.** Deposit keys, mail, your purse/wallet, and backpack. This will save time in the morning so you're not searching for your essentials. Once a week, sort your mail and attend to bills and other correspondence.
- **Start your morning routine 15 minutes earlier.** This will give you a buffer against unforeseen issues, such as traffic, inclement weather, or even an unexpected phone call or email.
- **Choose one day of the week to do laundry and errands.** This will save you from accumulating mountains of laundry and from running out several times during the week.
- **Attend to self-care!** Maintain a consistent and adequate sleep schedule, eat healthy, and get some regular exercise. Schedule time to participate in uplifting and relaxing activities and hobbies alone and with others. This will help you to manage stress on the frontline, and help prevent you from getting into crisis mode.
- **Allow breaks in your day.** We're not computers that can run all day. Schedule time to rest during the day and allow yourself reasonable breaks during your study times. This will ultimately give you greater energy and help you to be most productive and efficient.
- **Keep healthy boundaries with family, friends, classmates, and colleagues.** Set appropriate limits with others and learn to politely decline invitations or requests to participate in activities and events that drain your time and energy.
- **Ask for help.** Locate and utilize the campus counseling center, academic support services, and your advisor early in the semester. Make sure you ask for the help you need. There are individuals on the campus who know how to help you.

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