

Time Management

What is Time Management?

Time Management is scheduling your daily activities and future activities in order to be organized and utilize your time most effectively.

Techniques for Managing Study Time

1. Plan two hours study time for every hour spent in class. This is a good general rule, but there are exceptions. College courses are intense. Students are expected to grasp large amounts of information in a short period of time.
2. Study difficult (or boring) subjects first. Start with the course that is the most challenging; not the most interesting. Begin studying for these courses when your energy level is at its peak.
3. Avoid scheduling marathon study sessions. When possible, study in shorter sessions. Three 3-hour sessions are far more productive than a 9-hour marathon session. Anticipation of a long study session can be depressing; resulting in a negative attitude before the session has even begun. Take short breaks while studying. Stop to allow the information to be processed. Reading comprehension decreases after 20-30 minutes of sustained reading. If studying in large blocks of time is unavoidable, work on several subjects and avoid studying similar subjects back to back.
4. Be aware of your best time of day. Many people learn best in daylight hours; others are more effective at night. The optimum time must be identified in order to schedule study sessions.
5. Use waiting time. Become conscious of waiting time and use it. Waiting for a class to begin; waiting for the kids to get out of school; waiting for a bus; waiting in the doctor's office; these minutes are valuable. It only takes minutes to review flash cards, review lecture notes, or read a section of a chapter.
6. Use a regular study area. The body knows where it is. When the same place is used to study, day after day, the body becomes trained. Upon arriving at that place it will automatically sense that it's time to study. Do not sleep where you study. Do not eat where you study. Do not watch TV where you study. Use the study area for studying. Make it a ritual.
7. Don't get too comfortable. Easy chairs and sofas are dangerous places to study. Studying takes energy. The body must be sent a message that energy is needed. The study environment should support that message.
8. Use the library. Libraries are designed for learning. The lighting is adequate. The noise level is low. Materials are available.

How to Handle the Rest of the World

9. Pay attention to your attention. Breaks in concentration are often caused by internal interruptions; thoughts jump into your mind. When it happens, notice the thought and let it go.
10. Agree with living mates about study time. This includes kids, spouses, parents, and roommates. Make rules clear and follow them.
11. Avoid noise distractions. If noise interferes with concentration, eliminate as much of it as possible. Complete silence is impossible to achieve. If you are extremely sensitive to noise, gradually increasing the noise level of the study environment may be necessary to become more tolerant of outside distractions.

12. Others misuse your time. Become aware of how and when this occurs and who the offenders are. Avoid the interrupters whenever possible. If avoidance is not possible, send a clear message. Sometimes others do not realize they are breaking your concentration.
13. Get off the phone. The telephone is the perfect interrupter. People do not realize they are interrupting unless they are told. Don't use the phone call as an excuse for a break unless it's time for a break.
14. Learn to say no. This is a valuable time-saver for students and a valuable life skill. Establish parameters. Set limits. And stick to them.
15. Hang a "do not disturb" sign on the door. They work. Using one will eliminate many interruptions.