

Time Management Tips



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Transitioning to the college schedule can be freeing, but trying to manage classes along with everything else in life is a delicate balance. Here are some strategies and tips to help organize your time:

Find Your Time Management Tool

- Determine *what* to use to track your time. You can use your phone calendar, an app, a planner, or a wall calendar. Consider your habits and preferences.

Monthly

- In the monthly layout, add homework due dates, paper/project deadlines, exam dates, and other class details. When you receive a syllabus in class, make sure *that day* you enter the important information in your calendar.
- Add other important dates: family birthdays, athletic schedule, events, work schedule, etc.
- Check the calendar month often to keep track of how busy you are and what you need to be working on. You can see due dates and if you have multiple assignments/tests around the same time.
- Once you know when events and deadlines will occur, work backwards to map out when to start working on projects and studying for tests. Don't wait until the night before – cramming never leads to the best possible result.
- Set monthly goals and put the goal deadline in your calendar. Write out your goal (and why it is important to you) somewhere you will see it every day.

Weekly

- Plan your schedule two weeks in advance to give yourself time to study and work on larger projects. Doing so eliminates a surprise test/project/assignment early the following week you didn't realize was due.
- Review class notes to see if there are additional assignments to add to your calendar.
- Consider any other events, meetings, or reminders that you need to add to your calendar.

Daily

- Take time the night before to organize what the next day will look like. Use a to-do list to list everything you need to accomplish, including work you did not finish the night before. Consider the mandatory parts of your day (attending class, work, etc.). Throughout your day, check off events and items that are completed.
- Map your day by hour. First, add the mandatory parts of your day. Then, plan everything else. Determine how much time you should spend on your academics: writing part of a paper, studying, or working on an assignment. You can also narrow down time for meals and other daily tasks, such as meetings, going to the gym, and social outings with friends.



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Tips to Maximize Your Time

Start With The Least Exciting Task



It's easy to get overwhelmed with a task we don't want to complete, which makes it harder to get anything else done and easier to procrastinate. If you do the least exciting task first, then everything else is easier to accomplish and allows you to give your full focus to your other tasks.

Fight Procrastination



Stick to deadlines and break down larger tasks to help get things done in a timely manner instead of last minute. To stay on task, set phone reminders, have family or friends hold you accountable, and give yourself a small reward (like a piece of candy or a small break) for meeting your deadlines.

Organize Your Scholarly Life



Being organized can save time and help get tasks accomplished. Keeping your book bag/class materials in order, having a set place for notes and assignments for each class, and cleaning your study space are some of the many ways to keep organized and help avoid feeling overwhelmed.

Review and Update



Due dates change! Life changes! Review your schedule to see if you need to readjust. Keep track of accurate to-dos, events, meetings, and assignments in your planner, calendar, or app. This can help find extra time or to recognize early potential conflicts and stressors.

Prioritize



Write out a to-do list to identify what needs worked on first, second, third, etc. Prioritizing helps center your focus and sets a path for what you need to get done. Crossing items off your to-do list will provide relief and momentum to keep going. You got this!

Map Out Breaks



As you work on homework and studying, it is important to take regular breaks to refresh and refocus. Just be careful that a small break does not turn into accidentally stopping for the day. Healthy breaks may include: walking, mediating, eating (a healthy snack), or visiting the ARC.

Eliminate Distractions



Counteract potential distractions so you can accomplish your goals. Put your phone away. Study in a location where you can stay focused. Ask friends and family to be accountability partners, not causes of your distraction. If you budget two hours to get a paper finished and spend 100 minutes playing on your phone, you will still need to write your paper in addition to everything else on your to-do list!

Color Code and Categorize



Using different colors can help visually differentiate the different categories on your calendar. You can also use highlighters, symbols, stickers, etc. to help organize your calendar and determine what to do next. Make it your own!

*If you want to discuss an individualized time management plan, visit a Success Coach!
Call 724-738-2700 to schedule an appointment with a coach.*