

Time Management: Creating and Using a Schedule

Creating a Schedule

Why should we create a schedule?

- It saves time by helping you to keep from wasting time.
- It allows you to give enough time to each subject (more time for hard subjects and less time for easy subjects). It makes every hour count.
- It helps you to settle down to work more quickly. It increases concentration.
- It increases your reading and study efficiency.
- It helps you to distribute your study time properly for increased learning. It prevents cramming.

Step 1: Making a Schedule

- Fill in class hours.
- Block out other fixed hours (work, meetings, appointments, etc.)
- Indicate meal and sleep times.
- Allow 2 hours of study time for every class hour. Evaluate your own abilities carefully so that you allow enough time to master each subject. Later you can adjust the amount to the time you actually need (most students tend to overrate their ability or their speed of reading).
- Allow at least 15 minutes immediately after a lecture class (or as soon as possible) to review notes.
- Be realistic and allow enough time for eating, sleeping, exercise, and recreation.

Step 2: Try Out Your Schedule for One Week

- Keep an accurate record of what you actually did with your time.
- Be honest with yourself in keeping track of the time really spent studying.
- Look for problems in your schedule.
- Be critical of time spent "having a break" for 5 minutes that actually wastes 45 minutes.
- Examine old habits that prove to be counter-productive and eliminate them, if possible.
- Note the amount of time you might be able to save.

Step 3: Make out a new schedule, revising it to fit reality.

Some Hints on planning a Better Study Schedule

- Plan a schedule of balanced activities: not just when you will study
- Study at a regular time and in a regular place
- Study as soon after your lecture as possible
- Utilize odd hours during the day for studying
- Limit your blocks of study time to no more than 2 hours on any 1 course at a time
- Trade time, don't steal it—make adjustments to your schedule rather than abandoning it

10 Ways to Reduce Procrastination

- **Spend time each Sunday evening to plan your week.** Write a list of deadlines, appointments or meetings. Use a calendar to notate all and put reminders on the day of the meeting, as well as a reminder the day before. Use different color highlighters to color code the events of the week.
- **Use your own internal clock to plan your days.** If you are most productive in the morning, plan the most important tasks at that time. If you seem to lag during the morning but get into gear by mid afternoon, plan accordingly in order to be most efficient.
- **Keep in mind that it is easier to accomplish unpleasant or unwanted tasks if you know they will be over at a specific time.** Give yourself a time limit for those tasks you do not want to do. This way, the task may be more bearable. It is easier to work hard at something for one hour than to do so for an unlimited amount of time.
- **Make a decision immediately if you need to keep papers.** If not, throw it away. Many times, we will look at mail that comes in and put it in a pile to look at later. Later, of course, rarely comes. Choose to keep or throw away as soon as you get each piece of paper.
- **Choose one task to do early in the morning.** This way, you can feel that you have accomplished something, no matter what may happen the rest of the day.
- **Alternate your tasks.** If you have something that you do not look forward to doing, place something enjoyable before and after. This way, you complete something you enjoy, something that must be done, and then something you enjoy. Your day becomes more balanced and you will find that you accomplish more throughout the day.
- **Don't overwhelm yourself with large tasks.** Break them down into steps to be completed rather than one large daunting task. Try to keep each step to something that can be accomplished in 30 minutes or less.
- **Eliminate distractions.** If you are completing a task at home, turn off your home phone and your cell phone. Use a babysitter for an hour or two. Reducing the times you are interrupted will allow you to accomplish more in a shorter period of time.
- **Decide on your plan for the day and then implement it.** Avoid revising your plan and trying to create a better plan (really, this is a type of avoidance.)
- **Provide rewards for yourself throughout the day.** Each time you accomplish some item on your list, give yourself a reward.