

Effective Time Management

Ever wonder why some people are able to fit so many activities into their schedules while others barely seem to have time to attend classes? These people are not necessarily smarter, just better at managing their time.

3 STEPS TO EFFECTIVE TIME MANAGEMENT

Following these three steps will help you to use your time more effectively. As you go through the day, ask yourself, “What is the best use of my time right now?”

1. ORGANIZING

Better organization will improve the effective use of your time. Ideally, each morning (or night before you go to sleep), make a list of everything you want or need to get done that day (or the next day). Don’t think about which tasks are most important at this point: just write them all down. Once you establish this habit, you may want to organize yourself a few days in advance to help plan longer projects.

2. PRIORITIZING

Prioritize the items on your list. Assign an “A” to tasks that you HAVE TO DO; “B” to the tasks that you SHOULD DO; and “C” to the items that you can DEFER until the next day. Keep in mind the due dates and whether or not the items are class projects. Also consider how much of the final grade a particular project is worth (5% or 50%). This can help you decide how high a priority to assign to each project.

3. SCHEDULING

Now that you have prioritized your list, look at your schedule to fit your projects around the “givens” (class, work, sleep, etc.) in your day. Your schedule should be flexible: leave room for breaks, socializing, and those little unexpected things that tend to pop up. Don’t try to plan out every minute of your day! As you are scheduling, keep your personal needs and habits in mind. For example, don’t schedule study time in the morning if you like to sleep in late. Be realistic and make a schedule that you can be sure to stick to.

CREATING A “THINGS TO DO” LIST

An effective way of integrating Organizing, Prioritizing, and Scheduling into your life is by creating “things to do” lists. Here are some ideas to keep in mind when creating your lists:

- **MAKE YOUR TASKS “DO-ABLE”.** Make your list realistic: over-estimating the amount of things you can accomplish can put you into greater time binds.
- **ESTIMATE TIME REALISTICALLY.** Be sure to schedule enough time for you to get your tasks done. Also be sure to allow extra time in case there are problems. It is better to give yourself too much time than to cut yourself short.
- **DON’T PUT TOO MANY “SHOULD” OR “OUGHTS” ON YOUR LIST.** You need to maintain a healthy balance between the tasks you want to do, the tasks you feel you should do, and the tasks you have to do. If you focus too much of your time on the things you want to do, you’ll end up having less time to complete the tasks you have to do.
- **ESTABLISH A DAILY ROUTINE.** Determine for yourself what time of the day is best for doing certain activities, and get in the habit of doing them at that time.

- **INTEGRATE LISTS.** Have your lists include all aspects of your life. Having separate lists for class work, organizations, social activities, and work can be confusing.
- **MAKE TIME FOR PEOPLE AND FUN.** Everyone needs time to recreate, or his or her productivity will suffer. After taking time to recreate people often feel revitalized and have more energy to get work done.
- **FEEL OK WHEN YOU ARE FINISHED.** Spending lots of time regretting failures or feeling frustrated often wastes even more time. Feel good for accomplishing what you have, and then move on.

LEARN TO SAY NO

- Be sure to remember that there is not enough time each day to do everything for everybody. In order to keep from burning out, you need to take time for yourself and learn to say “no” to some of the requests of your time.
- Only you can realistically look at your commitments to see if you have the time to commit to other tasks. Say “no” when you don’t want to, can’t, or don’t have the time to do what is asked of you. If you over-commit yourself, everyone will come out behind.
- Openness and honesty are the keys to saying “no.” Your friends and co-workers will most likely understand your situation if you are honest with them.

FINDING TIME THROUGH TIME ANALYSIS

Analyzing your current schedule is one of the keys to determining how and when you can get more things done. Attached you will find a time analysis grid. Carefully go through the chart and darken or “X” all the times that are committed: i.e. work, club meetings, meals, classes, hobbies, etc. Don’t forget to put in those sleep hours for the mornings you sleep in and the relaxation times when you read, socialize, or do whatever. After you’ve done all this, take a look at the time that’s still unused. What are you doing during those times? Study this and try putting these hours to better use, whether it is for working, reading, or playing.

Based on the *Source* publication, University of Nebraska

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
7:00 a.m.							
8:00 a.m.							
9:00 a.m.							
10:00a.m.							
11:00a.m.							
12:00p.m.							
1:00 p.m.							
2:00 p.m.							
3:00 p.m.							
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