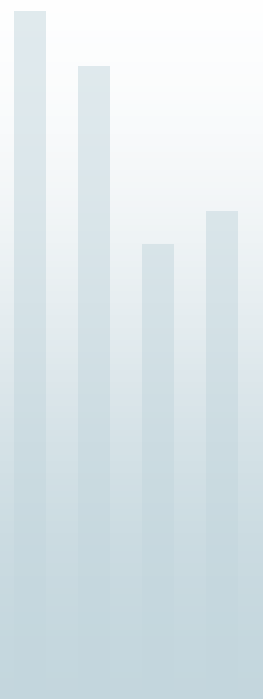


Time Management





“We all have time to either spend or waste and it is our decision what to do with it. But once passed, it is gone forever.”

-- Bruce Lee

from “Zen in the Martial Arts” by Joe Hyams



What are the elements of effective time management?

- Evaluate how you are using your time
- Determine your priorities
- Create a weekly schedule
- Maintain a to-do list
- Eliminate barriers to effective time management



Evaluating your use of time

The first step of effective time management is identifying how you are using your time.

- Make a list of the activities that you spend time on.
- Identify how much time the activities consume.
- Take note of activities you are keeping up with versus activities you are falling behind on.



Tips on evaluating your time

- Be systematic. Start in the morning and go through the day when thinking of your activities.
- Don't overlook activities like commuting, taking care of yourself, and relaxing. These activities may not be work or school related, but they consume time too.
- Be realistic. People often fail to allow enough time for activities.



Priorities

Many people work hard without achieving the things that they want. This comes from focusing on tasks that do not lead to goals.

People who manage their time well have identified tasks that lead to their goals. They focus their energy on these tasks.



Tips on Prioritizing

- Know your goals.
- Identify activities that help you achieve your goals.
- Decide whether activities need to be done in a particular order.
- Give the highest priority to tasks that are most necessary in achieving your goals and need to be done first.



Mark the priority level for each item on the list of activities that you created.

A = High Priority

B = Medium Priority

C = Low Priority

Remember that priorities can change. You need to re-visit your priority ratings often.



A Weekly Schedule

Now that you have identified your activities and prioritized them, it is time to create a schedule.

It is helpful to keep one's schedule in an appointment book or electronic organizer, but for purposes of planning you can use a scheduling grid like the one on the next slide.



Sample Scheduling Grid

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
9:00							
10:00							
11:00							
12:00							
1:00							
2:00							
3:00							
4:00							
5:00							
6:00							
7:00							
8:00							
9:00							



Scheduling Grid Instructions

- Block out times on the schedule for each of your major activities.
- Start with recurring activities that occur at a fixed time (examples: classes or work).
- Then block out time for activities that you want to do on a regular basis (examples: exercising or studying).



- Allot ample time for each activity, especially high priority activities.
- Take into account when you are most effective. Morning people might schedule more activities early in the day. Night owls might schedule things later.



To-Do Lists

The weekly schedule is used to assign blocks of time to different types of activities, but you also need to keep track of the specific tasks that must be accomplished within each activity. Keeping a to-do list is a good way to accomplish this.



- Make a written list of specific tasks or assignments that you need to do.
- Plan ahead, taking into account the entire semester.
- Allot time for these tasks in your schedule. Keep in mind their due dates.
- Assign priority ratings (A, B, or C) and revise as needed.
- Refer to the list often
- Check off items when completed.



Barriers to Effective Time Management

There are many barriers to effective time management, but they can be overcome. Here is a list of the most common barriers:

- Distractions
- Disorganization
- Perfectionism
- Procrastination
- Rigidity



Distractions

Distractions come in many forms, but we must learn to avoid distractions if we are to get work done. Here are a few ideas:

- Tell people when you are busy and cannot be disturbed.
- Work in areas where you are less likely to be disturbed.
- Do your work at times when you are most alert. It is easier to get distracted when you are tired.



Disorganization

People often waste much time because of disorganization. Here are some tips for staying organized:

- Keep things that you need in a specific place.
- Eliminate clutter.
- Before starting on a task, make sure that you have all of the materials or information that you need.
- Follow your schedule.



Perfectionism

It is a virtue to want to do a good job, but some people become so anxious about getting a job done perfectly that they never complete it.

- Examine whether your efforts to get the job done perfectly are really improving things or preventing you from getting the job done.
- Think about the cost-benefit ratio of the extra effort.
- Remember that nothing is perfect.



Procrastination

It is easy to put off tasks if they are not due right away. The trouble is, tasks pile up and you can run into a time crunch later.

Remember to work ahead whenever possible. If you can do it today, do it!



Rigidity

It is important to develop a habit of following your schedule, but some people become too rigid. Unexpected things come up and activities sometimes take more time than planned.

It is important to have some flexibility in your schedule. Allow extra time and avoid becoming too frustrated if things don't work out as planned... just re-evaluate the plan and make adjustments.



The Next Step

You have learned about evaluating your time, developing a weekly schedule, keeping a to-do list, and identified distractions that should be avoided. Now it is time for the next step: Put your time management skills into practice!