

6.5: Time Management

Manage Your Time



Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Understand the relationship between goals and time management.
- Consider how your priorities impact your time.
- Identify your time management personality.
- Assess your current use of time.
- Understand the basic principles of time management and planning.
- Use a calendar planner and daily to-do list to plan ahead for study tasks and manage your time effectively.
- Explore time management tips and strategies.
- Identify procrastination behaviors and strategies to avoid them.

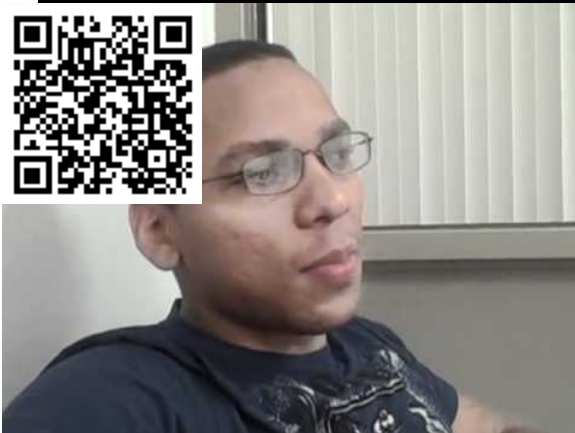
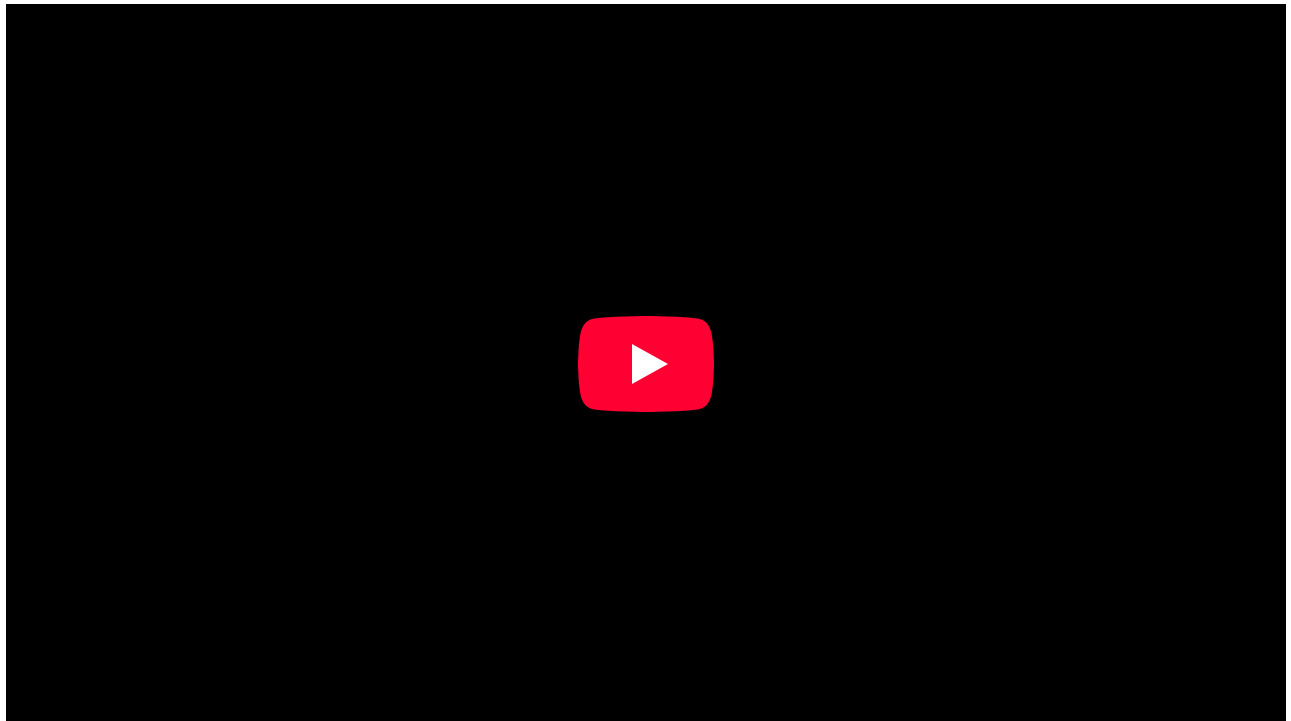
Goals and Time

Now that you have spent some time exploring your values and your goals, you can easily see how you need to manage your time well in order to accomplish your goals. When you have a long-term goal and break it down into mid-term and short-term goals, it leads to the question, “What do I need to do today in order to achieve my goal?” This question is at the heart of time management. Your goals guide how you spend your time and resources. Having clearly defined goals with specific deadlines leads you to be deliberate in planning your time and makes it easier to establish an effective time management system.

As most students discover, college is not the same as high school. For many students, college is the first time they are “on their own” in an environment filled with opportunity. And while this can be exciting, you may find that social opportunities and job responsibilities conflict with academic expectations. For example, a free day before an exam, if not wisely spent, can spell trouble for doing well on the exam. It is easy to fall behind when there are so many choices and freedoms.

One of the main goals of a college education is learning how to learn. In this section, we zoom in on learning how to skillfully manage your time. To be successful in college, it’s imperative to be able to effectively manage your time and to manage all aspects of your life including school, work, and social opportunities. Time management isn’t actually difficult, but you do need to learn how to do it well.

In the following Alleyoop Advice video, Alleyoop (Angel Aquino) discusses what many students discover about college: there is a lot of free time—and just as many challenges to balance free time with study time.



Alleyoop Advice: Time Management in College

Identifying Your Priorities

Thinking about your goals gets you started, but it's also important to think about priorities. We often use the word “priorities” to refer to how important something is to us. We might think, *This* is a really important goal, and *that* is less important. Try this experiment: go back to the goals you wrote in the last chapter and see if you can rank each goal as a 1 (top priority), 2 (middle priority), or 3 (lowest priority).

It sounds easy, but do you actually feel comfortable doing that? Maybe you gave a priority 1 to passing your courses and a priority 3 to playing your guitar. So what does that mean—that you never play guitar again, or at least not while in college? Whenever you have an hour free between class and work, you have to study because that's the higher priority? What about all your other goals—do you have to ignore everything that's not a priority 1? And what happens when you have to choose between different goals that are both number 1 priorities?

In reality, priorities don't work quite that way. It doesn't make a lot of sense to try to rank goals as *always* more or less important. The question of priority is really a question of what is more important *at a specific time*. It is important to do well in your classes, but it's also important to earn money to support yourself and have a social life. You shouldn't have to choose between these, except *at any given time*. Priorities always involve time: what is most important to do *right now*. Time management is mostly a way to juggle priorities so you can meet all your goals.

When you manage your time well, you don't have to ignore some goals completely in order to meet other goals. In other words, you don't have to give up your life when you register for college, but you may need to work on managing your life and time more effectively.

But, time management works only when you're committed to your goals. Attitude and motivation are very important. If you haven't yet developed an attitude for success, all the time management skills in the world won't keep you focused and motivated to succeed.

The Eisenhower Method

One way to help you identify your priorities is with the "Eisenhower Box," a tool to help evaluate urgency and importance. Items may be placed at more precise points within each quadrant.

The "Eisenhower Method" stems from a quote attributed to [Dwight D. Eisenhower](#): "I have two kinds of problems, the urgent and the important. The urgent are not important, and the important are never urgent."

Using the Eisenhower Decision Principle, tasks are evaluated using the criteria important/unimportant and urgent/not urgent, and then placed in according quadrants in an Eisenhower Matrix (also known as an "Eisenhower Box" or "Eisenhower Decision Matrix"). It is important to understand the difference between urgency and importance. An urgent item needs to be dealt with immediately. An item that is important needs to be dealt with but may or may not need to be dealt with immediately. Tasks are then handled as follows:

1. **Important/Urgent** quadrant items must be taken care of immediately. Examples include:
 - Crises like accidents
 - A flat tire
 - A screaming baby
 - A broken water heater
 - Last minute deadlines
 - Pressing problems
2. **Important/Not Urgent** quadrant items need to be accomplished but have an end date or due date that isn't urgent or pressing. Examples include:
 - Homework
 - Studying for an upcoming exam
 - Exercise
 - Planning an upcoming trip
 - Time with friends, family, and relationships
3. **Unimportant/Urgent** quadrant are items that can often feel urgent but they really aren't. Although they may feel like they need to be attended to immediately, they are not very important and can actually wait. Examples include:
 - Text messages
 - Social media alerts
 - Some phone calls
 - Junk mail
4. **Unimportant/Not Urgent** quadrant are your time wasters, things that are not important and not urgent. Examples include things like:
 - Television
 - Video games
 - Hanging out with friends (not planned social events)
 - Web surfing

	Urgent	Not Urgent
Important	Crying baby Kitchen fire Some calls 1	Exercise Vocation Planning 2
Not Important	Interruptions Distractions Other calls 3	Trivia Busy work Time wasters 4

As you can see, the Urgent/Important category (#1) needs to be attended to first and should top your list of priorities, followed by the Not Urgent/Important category (#2). You can imagine that the Category #1 is a stressful place, with emergencies and crises, and one you would like to avoid. Life will bring you plenty of Category #1 items so try your best to keep things out of that category. Work productively in Category #2 so items don't unnecessarily end up being urgent. For example, a paper or a test shouldn't be urgent, as they aren't last minute crisis. The more you focus on Category #2, the more you accomplish with less stress.

Identify Your Time Management Style

People's attitudes toward time vary widely. One person seems to be always rushing around but actually gets less done than another person who seems unconcerned about time and calmly goes about the day. Since there are so many different "time personalities," it's important to realize how you approach time. Try the following activity to help you identify your personal time management style.

Activity 1: Identify your Time Management Style

The following self-assessment survey can help you determine your time-management personality type. Read each question in the Questions column. Then read the possible responses. Select one response for each question. Each response should reflect what you probably would do in a given situation, not what you think is the "right" answer. Put a checkmark in the My Time Management Type column next to your likely response.

Self-Assessment Survey

QUESTIONS		RESPONSES: Which response most closely matches what you would do? In the right column, check one response (a, b, c or d) for each question.	MY TIME MANAGEMENT TYPE
1	Your instructor just gave your class the prompts for your first essay, which is due in two weeks. How do you proceed from here?	a. Choose a prompt and begin working on a thesis immediately. Better to get it out of the way!	<input type="radio"/> Early bird
		b. Read over the prompts and let them sink in for a week or so. You'll still have one more week to finish the assignment, right?	<input type="radio"/> Balancing act
		c. Read the prompts and maybe start playing around with ideas, but wait to really start writing until the day before. You swear it's all in your head somewhere!	<input type="radio"/> Pressure cooker
		d. Look at the prompts the morning that assignment is due and quickly type up your essay. This makes you late for class, but at least you got it turned in on time.	<input type="radio"/> Improviser

QUESTIONS		RESPONSES: Which response most closely matches what you would do? In the right column, check one response (a, b, c or d) for each question.	MY TIME MANAGEMENT TYPE
2	You are working on a group assignment that requires you to split up responsibilities with three other classmates. When would you typically finish your part?	a. First. Then you're done and don't have to worry about it. Plus it could give you time in case you want to tweak anything later.	<input type="radio"/> Early bird
		b. After one or two of the others have submitted their materials to the group, but definitely not last. You wanted to see how they approached it first.	<input type="radio"/> Balancing act
		c. Maybe last, but definitely before the assignment due date and hopefully before any of the other group members ask about it.	<input type="radio"/> Pressure cooker
		d. Definitely last. You'll wait until everyone else has done their work, so you can make sure you are not duplicating efforts. Whatever, this is why you hate group work.	<input type="radio"/> Improviser
3	Your instructor just shared the instructions for your next assignment and you read them but don't quite understand what he's asking for in a certain part. What would you probably do?	a. Send the instructor an email that afternoon. When he doesn't respond that night, email him again. This is your worst nightmare—you just want to know what he wants!!	<input type="radio"/> Early bird
		b. Send him an email asking for clarification, giving yourself enough time to wait for his response and then complete the assignment. Better to be safe than sorry.	<input type="radio"/> Balancing act
		c. Try to figure it out for yourself. You're pretty sure what he's trying to say, and you'll give it your best shot.	<input type="radio"/> Pressure cooker
		d. Don't say anything until after the assignment is due. Other people in the class felt the same way too, probably!	<input type="radio"/> Improviser
4	The course you are taking requires you to post in a weekly discussion forum by Sunday night each week so the class can talk about everyone's posts on Monday. When do you submit your posts?	a. Tuesday night, after the first day of class that week. Then it's out of the way.	<input type="radio"/> Early bird
		b. Thursday or Friday night. You want to let the week's discussion sink in a little so you can collect your thoughts.	<input type="radio"/> Balancing act
		c. Sunday night. You always forget over the weekend!	<input type="radio"/> Pressure cooker
		d. Monday at 3 AM. That still counts as Sunday night, right?	<input type="radio"/> Improviser
5	You have an important assignment due Monday morning, and you have a social/work/family obligation that will keep you busy for most of the weekend. It is now the Wednesday before the assignment is due. How would you approach this dilemma?	a. You already finished it yesterday, the day it was assigned. Done!	<input type="radio"/> Early bird
		b. You tell yourself that you'll finish it by Friday night, and you manage this by chipping away at it over those 3 days. ...Little. By. Little.	<input type="radio"/> Balancing act

QUESTIONS		RESPONSES: Which response most closely matches what you would do? In the right column, check one response (a, b, c or d) for each question.	MY TIME MANAGEMENT TYPE
6	You have to read 150 pages before your next class meeting. You have 4 days to do so. What would you most likely do?	c. You tell yourself that you'll finish it by Friday night, so you can have your weekend free, but you still have a little left to do on Sunday—no big deal.	O Pressure cooker
		d. You tell yourself that you'll take the weekend off, then stay up late on Sunday or wake up early on Monday to finish it. It's not a final or anything, and you have a life.	O Improviser
		a. 150 pages divided by 4 days means... a little less than 40 pages a day. You like to chunk it this way because then you'll also have time to go over your notes and highlights and come up with questions for the instructor.	O Early bird
		b. 150 pages divided by...well ... 2 days (because it's been a long week), means 75 pages a day. Totally doable.	O Balancing act
		c. 150 pages, the day before it is due. You did this to yourself, it's fine.	O Pressure cooker
		d. How much time does it take to skim the text for keywords and/or find a summary online?	O Improviser

Assessing Your Responses

Which of the four basic time-management personality types did you select the most? Which did you select the least? Do you feel like these selections match the student you have been in the past? Has your previous way of doing things worked for you, or do you think it's time for a change? Remember, we can all always improve!

Learn more below about your tendencies. Review traits, strengths, challenges, and tips for success for each of the four time-management personality types.

The Early Bird

- **Traits:** You like to make checklists and feel great satisfaction when you can cross something off of your to-do list. When it comes to assignments, you want to get started as soon as possible (and maybe start brainstorming before that), because it lets you stay in control.
- **Strengths:** You know what you want and are driven to figure out how to achieve it. Motivation is never really a problem for you.
- **Challenges:** Sometimes you can get more caught up in getting things done as quickly as possible and don't give yourself enough time to really mull over issues in all of their complexity.
- **Tips for Success:** You're extremely organized and on top of your schoolwork, so make sure you take the time to really enjoy learning in your classes. Remember, school isn't all deadlines and checkboxes—you also have the opportunity to think about big-picture intellectual problems that don't necessarily have clear answers.

The Balancing Act

- **Traits:** You really know what you're capable of and are ready to do what it takes to get the most out of your classes. Maybe you're naturally gifted in this way or maybe it's a skill that you have developed over time; in any case, you should have the basic organizational skills to succeed in any class, as long as you keep your balance.
- **Strengths:** Your strength really lies in your ability to be well rounded. You may not always complete assignments perfectly every time, but you are remarkably consistent and usually manage to do very well in classes.

- **Challenges:** Because you're so consistent, sometimes you can get in a bit of a rut and begin to coast in class, rather than really challenging yourself.
- **Tips for Success:** Instead of simply doing what works, use each class as an opportunity for growth by engaging thoughtfully with the material and constantly pushing the boundaries of your own expectations for yourself.

The Pressure Cooker

- **Traits:** You always get things done and almost always at the last minute. Hey, it takes time to really come up with good ideas!
- **Strengths:** You work well under pressure, and when you do finally sit down to accomplish a task, you can sit and work for hours. In these times, you can be extremely focused and shut out the rest of the world in order to complete what's needed.
- **Challenges:** You sometimes use your ability to work under pressure as an excuse to procrastinate. Sure, you can really focus when the deadline is tomorrow but is it really the best work you could produce if you had a couple of days of cushion?
- **Tips for Success:** Give yourself small, achievable deadlines, and stick to them. Make sure they're goals that you really could (and would) achieve in a day. Then don't allow yourself to make excuses. You'll find that it's actually a lot more enjoyable to not be stressed out when completing schoolwork. Who would have known?

The Improviser

- **Traits:** You frequently wait until the last minute to do assignments, but it's because you've been able to get away with this habit in many classes. Sometimes you miss an assignment or two, or have to pretend to have done reading that you haven't, but everyone does that sometimes, right?
- **Strengths:** You think quickly on your feet, and while this is a true strength, it also can be a crutch that prevents you from being really successful in a class.
- **Challenges:** As the saying goes, old habits die hard. If you find that you lack a foundation of discipline and personal accountability, it can be difficult to change, especially when the course material becomes challenging or you find yourself struggling to keep up with the pace of the class.
- **Tips for Success:** The good news is you can turn this around! Make a plan to organize your time and materials in a reasonable way, and really stick with it. Also, don't be afraid to ask your instructor for help, but be sure to do it before, rather than after, you fall behind.

People also differ in how they respond to schedule changes. Some go with the flow and accept changes easily, while others function well only when following a planned schedule and may become upset if that schedule changes. If you do not react well to an unexpected disruption in your schedule, plan extra time for catching up if something throws you off. This is all part of understanding your time personality.

Another aspect of your time personality involves the time of day. If you need to concentrate, such as when writing a class paper, are you more alert and focused in the morning, afternoon, or evening? Do you concentrate best when you look forward to a relaxing activity later on, or do you study better when you've finished all other activities? Do you function well if you get up early, or stay up late, to accomplish a task? How does that affect the rest of your day or the next day? Understanding this will help you better plan your study periods.

While you may not be able to change your "time personality," you can learn to manage your time more successfully. The key is to be realistic. The best way to improve your time management is to take an honest look at how you are currently spending your time.

Assess Your Use Of Time

The best way to know how you spend your time is to record what you do all day in a time log, every day for a week, and then add that up. First, you want to take your best guess at how you are currently spending your time so you can compare that with how you are actually spending your time. This helps you identify the areas you need to work on.

Activity 2: Where Does the Time Go?

See if you can account for a week's worth of time. For each of the activity categories listed, make your best estimate of how many hours you spend in a week. (For categories that are about the same every day, just estimate for one day and multiply by seven for that line.)

Organizing Your Time

Category of activity	Estimated Hours per week	Actual Hours per week

Category of activity	Estimated Hours per week	Actual Hours per week
Sleeping		
Eating (including preparing food)		
Personal hygiene (i.e., bathing, etc.)		
Working (employment)		
Volunteer service or internship		
Chores, cleaning, errands, shopping, etc.		
Attending class		
Studying, homework, reading, and researching (outside of class)		
Transportation to work or school		
Getting to classes (walking, biking, etc.)		
Organized group activities (clubs, church services, etc.)		
Time with friends (include television, video games, etc.)		
Attending events (movies, parties, etc.)		
Time alone (include television, video games, surfing the Web, etc.)		
Exercise or sports activities		
Reading for fun or other interests done alone		
Time on the phone, texting, Facebook, Twitter, etc.		
Other—specify: _____		
Other—specify: _____		
TOTAL (168 hours in a week)		

Now use your calculator to total your estimated hours. Is your number larger or smaller than 168, the total number of hours in a week? If your estimate is higher, go back through your list and adjust numbers to be more realistic. But if your estimated hours total fewer than 168, don't just go back and add more time in certain categories. Instead, ponder this question: *Where does the time go?* We'll come back to this question.

Next, print the Time Log and carry it with you throughout the week. Every few hours, fill in what you have been doing. Do this for a week before adding up the times; then enter the total hours in the categories in Activity 2. You might be surprised that you spend a lot more time than you thought just hanging out with friends, or surfing the Web or playing around with Facebook or any of the many other things people do. You might find that you study well early in the morning even though you thought you are a night person, or vice versa. You might learn how long you can continue at a specific task before needing a break.

Time Log

	Time Log						
	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
6-7 am							
7-8							
8-9							

9-10							
10-11							
11-12							
12-1 pm							
1-2							
2-3							
3-4							
4-5							
5-6							
6-7							
7-8							
8-9							
9-10							
10-11							
11-12							
12-1 am							
1-2							
2-3							
3-4							
4-5							
5-6							

Establishing A Time Management System

Now that you've evaluated how you have done things in the past, you'll want to think about how you might create a schedule for managing your time well going forward. The best schedules have some flexibility built into them, as unexpected situations and circumstances will likely arise during your time as a student.

For every hour in the classroom, college students should spend, on average, about two to three hours on that class reading, studying, writing papers, and so on. Look at the following scenarios to get an idea of how many hours you should be spending on your classes outside of class time.

12 credit hours over a 15-week session = 12 hours a week in class + 24-36 hours outside of class

6 credit hours over a 15-week session = 6 hours a week in class + 12-18 hours outside of class

3 credit hours over a 6-week session = 8 hours a week in class + 16-24 hours outside of class

If you're a full-time student with twelve hours a week in class plus your study time, that 36-42 hours is about the same as a typical full-time job, which is why you are considered to be a full-time student. If you work part-time or have a family, time management skills are even more essential. To succeed in college, everyone has to develop effective strategies for dealing with time.

Look back at the number of hours you wrote in Activity 2 for a week of studying. Do you have two to three hours of study time for every hour in class? Many students begin college not knowing this much time is needed, so don't be surprised if you

underestimated this number of hours. Remember this is just an average amount of study time—you may need more or less for your own courses. To be safe, and to help ensure your success, add another five to ten hours a week for studying.

To reserve this study time, you may need to adjust how much time you spend on other activities. Activity 3 will help you figure out what your typical week should look like.

Activity 3: Where Should Your Time Go?

Plan for the ideal use of a week's worth of time. Fill in your hours in this order:

1. Hours attending class
2. Study hours (2 times the number of class hours plus 5 or more hours extra)
3. Work, internships, and fixed volunteer time
4. Fixed life activities (sleeping, eating, hygiene, chores, transportation, etc.)

Now subtotal your hours so far and subtract that number from 168. How many hours are left? _____. Then portion out the remaining hours for “discretionary activities” (things you don’t have to do for school, work, or a healthy life).

5. Discretionary activities

Where Should Your Time Go?

CATEGORY OF ACTIVITY	HOURS PER WEEK
Attending class	
Studying, reading, and researching (outside of class)	
Working (employment)	
Transportation to work or school	
Sleeping	
Eating (including preparing food)	
Personal hygiene (i.e., bathing, etc.)	
Chores, cleaning, errands, shopping, etc.	
Volunteer service or internship	
Getting to classes (walking, biking, etc.)	
Subtotal:	
Discretionary activities:	
Organized group activities (clubs, church services, etc.)	
Time with friends (include television, video games, etc.)	
Attending events (movies, parties, etc.)	
Time alone (include television, video games, surfing the Web, etc.)	
Exercise or sports activities	
Hobbies or other interests done alone	
Time on the phone, texting, Facebook, Twitter, etc.	
Other—specify: _____	
Other—specify: _____	

Activity 3 shows most college students that they do actually have plenty of time for their studies without losing sleep or giving up their social life. But you may have less time for discretionary activities, like video games or watching movies, than in the past. *Something, somewhere has to give.* That's part of time management and why it's important to keep your goals and priorities in mind.

Below is an example of a student's weekly schedule, with designated times for class, work and study time.

Kai's Schedule

Since Kai's Spanish class starts his schedule at 9:00 every day, Kai decides to use that as the base for his schedule. He doesn't usually have trouble waking up in the mornings (except on the weekends), so he decides that he can do a bit of studying before class. His Spanish practice is often something he can do while eating or traveling, so this gives him a bit of leniency with his schedule.

Example: Kai's Schedule




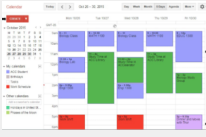
	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
7:00 AM							
8:00 AM		Spanish 101	Spanish 101	Spanish 101	Spanish 101	Spanish 101	
9:00 AM		Spanish 101	Spanish 101	Spanish 101	Spanish 101	Spanish 101	
10:00 AM		US History I	Spanish 101	US History I	Spanish 101	US History I	
11:00 AM		College Algebra	Intro to Psychology (ends at 12:30)	College Algebra	Intro to Psychology (ends at 12:30)	College Algebra	Work
12:00 PM		Spanish 101		Spanish 101		Spanish 101	
1:00 PM	Spanish 101	Work (start 12:30 end 4:30)	Work	Work (start 12:30 end 4:30)	Work	Work (start 12:30 end 4:30)	Spanish 101
2:00 PM	US History I						Intro to Psych
3:00 PM							
4:00 PM							
5:00 PM		College Algebra	Work	College Algebra	Work	College Algebra	
6:00 PM							
7:00 PM							
8:00 PM		Intro to Psych		Intro to Psych			
9:00 PM			US History I		US History I		

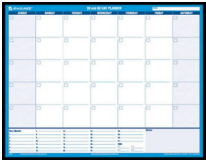
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
10:00 PM						

Creating a Planner

Now that you know what you need to be spending your time on, let's work on getting it put into a schedule or calendar. The first thing you want to do is select what type of planner or calendar you want to use. There are several to choose from. The following chart outlines some pros and cons to different systems. online calendars, weekly calendars, monthly calendars and wall calendars.

Different Types of Planners

Type	Example	Cost	Pros	Cons
Weekly Planner		\$5-\$10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Room to write details or multiple items Comes in a variety of sizes Affordable Easy to carry with you Easy to look ahead Physically writing things down may help you remember them. Often includes a To-Do list. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May be difficult to make changes in. Have to write repeating events, such as class time Not always enough room for details or multiple events Can be lost Can be forgotten at home
Monthly Planner		\$5-\$15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comes in a variety of sizes Affordable Easy to carry with you Easy to look ahead Physically writing things down may help you remember them. Often includes a To-Do list 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Often large and bulky Not much room to write details or multiple events Can be lost Can be forgotten Difficult to make changes and can become messy
Daily Planner		\$5-\$10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A lot of room to write details Allows room for multiple daily events Often includes a To-Do list. Affordable Comes in a variety of sizes Easy to carry with you 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can be difficult to look ahead to see what is coming up Can be lost Can be forgotten
Electronic Calendar		Free	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set repeating events Color code events Set multiple reminders Add notes Check by phone or computer so almost always available Often includes a To-Do list Have a back-up if lost Can import other calendars 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small screen Checking your phone may distract you Frequent reminders may become ignored Easy to make mistakes entering Difficult to see details when looking ahead

Type	Example	Cost	Pros	Cons
Dry Erase Calendar		\$15 – \$20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be monthly or yearly • Large, visually appealing look at your month or year • Reusable • May include a To-Do list 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard to see the next month • You carry it with you so may forget to make changes when you get home • Have to re-write things each month • Not much room to write details or multiple events • Can get messy

What Goes in Your Planner?

Now that you have selected your planner, it's time to fill it in. But what goes in it? Well, everything! Start by putting in your top priorities and then move on to your discretionary time.

Priorities

- Class time
- Work Time
- Designated study time (2-3 hours per hour in class)
- Assignment due dates (check your syllabus)
- Exam dates and quizzes (check your syllabus)
- Appointments
- Birthdays of family and friends

Discretionary Time

- Social events
- Parties
- Exercise
- Club activities
- Church activities

Reminders

- Birthdays
- Anniversaries
- Holidays

Your schedule will vary depending on the course you're taking. So pull out your syllabus for each class and try to determine the rhythm of the class by looking at the following factors:

- Will you have tests or exams in this course? When are those scheduled?
- Are there assignments and papers? When are those due?
- Is there any group or collaborative assignments? You'll want to pay particular attention to the timing of any assignment that requires you to work with others.

Remember Your Goals

Does your schedule reflect your goals? Set your short and long-term goals accordingly. Ask yourself the following:

- What needs to get done today?
- What needs to get done this week?
- What needs to get done by the end the first month of the semester?
- What needs to get done by the end the second month of the semester?
- What needs to get done by the end of the semester?

Don't try to micromanage your schedule. Don't try to estimate exactly how many minutes you'll need two weeks from today to read a given chapter in a given textbook. Instead, just choose the blocks of time you will use for your studies. Don't yet write in the

exact study activity, just reserve the block. Next, look at the major deadlines for projects and exams that you wrote in earlier. Estimate how much time you may need for each and work backward on the schedule from the due date.

Plan Backwards

As a college student, you will likely have big assignments, papers, or projects that you are expected to work on throughout the semester. These are often tricky for students to schedule since it isn't a regularly occurring event, like a weekly quiz or a homework assignment. These big projects often feel overwhelming so students have a tendency to shy away from them and procrastinate on them. This often results in a lot of last-minute stress and panic when the deadline is looming. A way to plan for these big projects is to plan backward. Start at the final project and then figure out all the steps that come before it and assign due dates for yourself. For example, you have a research paper due May 1. Start there!

Assignments and Due Date

Assignment	Due Date
Research Paper Due	May 1
Final Draft	April 28
Rough Draft	April 21
Final Outline	April 7
Find sources	March 24
Thesis statement	March 17
Select topic	March 10

You have now created a series of assignments for yourself that will keep you on track for your project. Put these dates in your planner the same way you would any other assignment.

Establish A To-Do List

People use to-do lists in different ways, and you should find what works best for you. As with your planner, consistent use of your to-do list will make it an effective habit.

Some people prefer not to carry their planner everywhere but instead, copy the key information for the day onto a to-do list. Using this approach, your daily to-do list starts out with your key scheduled activities and then adds other things you hope to do today. This is a good fit for those that prefer to keep a wall calendar at home rather than carry their planner with them.

Some people use their to-do list only for things not included in their planners, such as short errands, phone calls or e-mail, and the like. This still includes important things, but they're not scheduled out for specific times like your planner is.

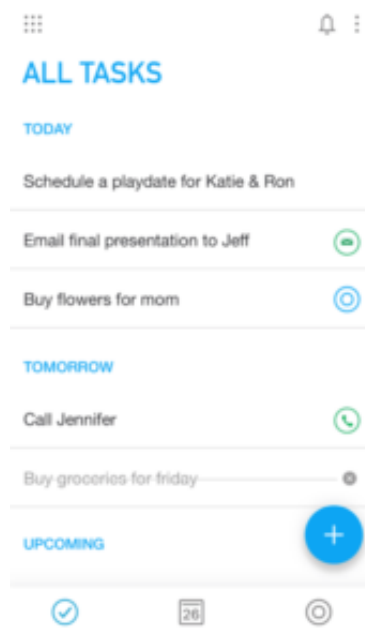
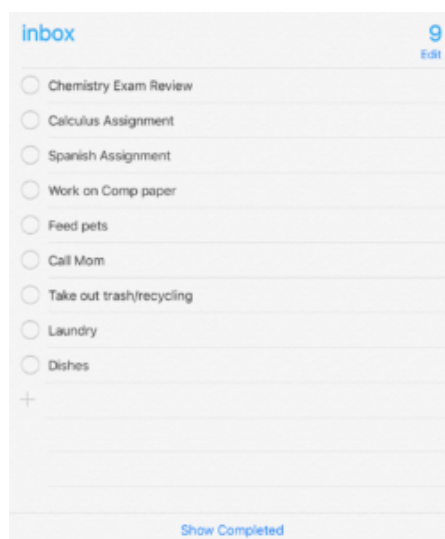
Although we call it a daily list, the to-do list can also include things you may not get to today but don't want to forget about. Keeping these things on the list, even if they're a low priority, helps ensure that eventually, you'll get to it.

Just as there are several options for planners, there are different types of to-do lists. Check your planner to see if it has one incorporated. If not, get a small notebook or pad of paper that you will designate as your to-do list. Of course, there's always an app for that! Your smartphone likely came with a Reminder App or another type of To-Do List app. There are also many free apps to choose from and there are apps to help you manage your homework and assignments. Take a few minutes to look through your options to pick the best one for you.

Your To-Do list should be a reflection of your goals and priorities and should support your planner. Your To-Do List should answer the question, "What do I have to do today, this week, this month?"

Here are some examples of different to-do lists.

 To Do List



Use whatever format works best for you to prioritize or highlight the most important activities.

Here are some more tips for effectively using your daily to-do list:

- Be specific: “Read history chapter 2 (30 pages)” —not “History homework.”
- Put important things high on your list where you’ll see them every time you check the list.
- Make your list at the same time every day so that it becomes a habit.
- Don’t make your list overwhelming. If you added *everything* you eventually need to do, you could end up with so many things on the list that you’d never read through them all. If you worry you might forget something, write it in the margin of your planner’s page a week or two away.
- Use your list. Lists often include little things that may take only a few minutes to do, so check your list anytime during the day you have a moment free.
- Cross out or check off things after you’ve done them—doing this becomes rewarding.
- Don’t use your to-do list to procrastinate. Don’t pull it out to find something else you just “have” to do instead of studying!

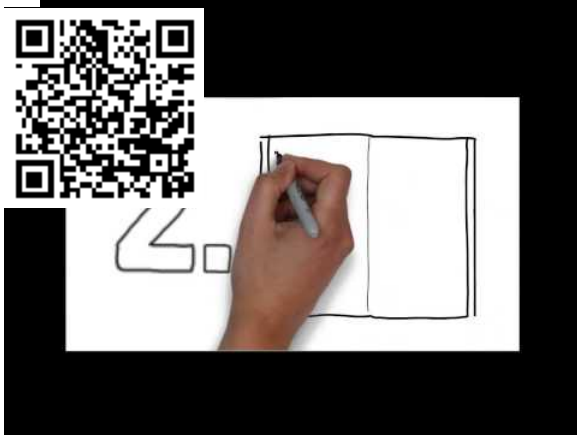
Time Management Strategies

Following are some strategies you can begin using immediately to make the most of your time:

- **Prepare to be successful.** When planning ahead for studying, think yourself into the right mood. Focus on the positive. “When I get these chapters read tonight, I’ll be ahead in studying for the next test, and I’ll also have plenty of time tomorrow to do X.” *Visualize* yourself studying well!
- **Use your best—and most appropriate—time of day.** Different tasks require different mental skills. Some kinds of studying you may be able to start first thing in the morning as you wake, while others need your most alert moments at another time.
- **Break up large projects into small pieces.** Whether it’s writing a paper for class, studying for a final exam, or reading a long assignment or full book, students often feel daunted at the beginning of a large project. It’s easier to get going if you break it up into stages that you schedule at separate times—and then begin with the first section that requires only an hour or two.
- **Do the most important studying first.** When two or more things require your attention, do the more crucial one first. If something happens and you can’t complete everything, you’ll suffer less if the most crucial work is done.
- **If you have trouble getting started, do an easier task first.** Like large tasks, complex or difficult ones can be daunting. If you can’t get going, switch to an easier task you can accomplish quickly. That will give you momentum, and often you feel more confident in tackling the difficult task after being successful in the first one.
- **If you’re feeling overwhelmed and stressed because you have too much to do, revisit your time planner.** Sometimes it’s hard to get started if you keep thinking about other things you need to get done. Review your schedule for the next few days and make sure everything important is scheduled, then relax and concentrate on the task at hand.

- **If you're really floundering, talk to someone.** Maybe you just don't understand what you should be doing. Talk to your instructor or another student in the class to get back on track.
- **Take a break.** We all need breaks to help us concentrate without becoming fatigued and burned out. As a general rule, a short break every hour or so is effective in helping recharge your study energy. Get up and move around to get your blood flowing, clear your thoughts, and work off stress.
- **Use unscheduled times to work ahead.** You've scheduled that hundred pages of reading for later today, but you have the textbook with you as you're waiting for the bus. Start reading now, or flip through the chapter to get a sense of what you'll be reading later. Either way, you'll save time later. You may be amazed at how much studying you can get done during downtimes throughout the day.
- **Keep your momentum.** Prevent distractions, such as multitasking, that will only slow you down. Check for messages, for example, only at scheduled break times.
- **Reward yourself.** It's not easy to sit still for hours of studying. When you successfully complete the task, you should feel good and deserve a small reward. A healthy snack, a quick video game session, or social activity can help you feel even better about your successful use of time.
- **Just say no.** Always tell others nearby when you're studying, to reduce the chances of being interrupted. Still, interruptions happen, and if you are in a situation where you are frequently interrupted by a family member, spouse, roommate, or friend, it helps to have your "no" prepared in advance: "No, I *really* have to be ready for this test" or "That's a great idea, but let's do it tomorrow—I *just can't* today." You shouldn't feel bad about saying no—especially if you told that person in advance that you needed to study.
- **Have a life.** Never schedule your day or week so full of work and study that you have no time at all for yourself, your family and friends, and your larger life.
- **Use a calendar planner and a daily to-do list.**

Watch this supplemental video, College Survival Tips: Time Management for Beginners by MyCollegePalTeam6, for a brief re-cap of effective time management strategies.



College Survival Tips: Time Management for Beginners

Time Management Tips for Students Who Work

If you're both working and taking classes, you seldom have large blocks of free time. Avoid temptations to stay up very late studying, for losing sleep can lead to a downward spiral in performance at both work and school. Instead, try to follow these guidelines:

- If possible, adjust your work or sleep hours so that you don't spend your most productive times at work. If your job offers flex time, arrange your schedule to be free to study at times when you perform best.
- Try to arrange your class and work schedules to minimize commuting time. If you are a part-time student taking two classes, taking classes back-to-back two or three days a week uses less time than spreading them out over four or five days. Working four ten-hour days rather than five eight-hour days reduces time lost to travel, getting ready for work, and so on.
- If you can't arrange an effective schedule for classes and work, consider online courses that allow you to do most of the work on your own time.
- Use your daily and weekly planner conscientiously. Anytime you have thirty minutes or more free, schedule a study activity.
- Consider your "body clock" when you schedule activities. Plan easier tasks for those times when you're often fatigued and reserve alert times for more demanding tasks.
- Look for any "hidden" time potentials. Maybe you prefer the thirty-minute drive to work over a forty-five-minute train ride. But if you can read on the train, that's a gain of ninety minutes every day at the cost of thirty minutes longer travel time. An hour a

day can make a huge difference in your studies.

- Can you do quick study tasks during slow times at work? Take your class notes with you and use even five minutes of free time wisely.
- Remember your long-term goals. You need to work, but you also want to finish your college program. If you have the opportunity to volunteer for some overtime, consider whether it's really worth it. Sure, the extra money would help, but could the extra time put you at risk for not doing well in your classes?
- Be as organized on the job as you are academically. Use your planner and to-do list for work matters, too. The better organized you are at work, the less stress you'll feel—and the more successful you'll be as a student also.
- If you have a family as well as a job, your time is even more limited. In addition to the previous tips, try some of the strategies that follow.

Time Management Tips for Students with Family

Living with family members often introduces additional time stresses. You may have family obligations that require careful time management. Use all the strategies described earlier, including family time in your daily plans the same as you would hours spent at work. Don't assume that you'll be "free" every hour you're home, because family events or a family member's need for your assistance may occur at unexpected times. Schedule your important academic work well ahead and in blocks of time you control. See also the earlier suggestions for controlling your space: you may need to use the library or another space to ensure you are not interrupted or distracted during important study times.

Students with their own families are likely to feel time pressures. After all, you can't just tell your partner or kids that you'll see them in a couple years when you're not so busy with job and college! In addition to all the planning and study strategies discussed so far, you also need to manage your family relationships and time spent with family. While there's no magical solution for making more hours in the day, even with this added time pressure there are ways to balance your life well:

- Talk everything over with your family. If you're going back to school, your family members may not have realized changes will occur. Don't let them be shocked by sudden household changes. Keep communication lines open so that your partner and children feel they're together with you in this new adventure. Eventually, you will need their support.
- Work to enjoy your time together, whatever you're doing. You may not have as much time together as previously, but cherish the time you do have—even if it's washing dishes together or cleaning house. If you've been studying for two hours and need a break, spend the next ten minutes with family instead of checking e-mail or watching television. Ultimately, the important thing is *being together*, not going out to movies or dinners or the special things you used to do when you had more time. Look forward to being with family and appreciate every moment you are together, and they will share your attitude.

Overcoming Procrastination

Procrastination Checklist

Do any of the following descriptions apply to you?

- My paper is due in two days and I haven't really started writing it yet.
- I've had to pull an all-nighter to get an assignment done on time.
- I've turned in an assignment late or asked for an extension when I really didn't have a good excuse not to get it done on time.
- I've worked right up to the minute an assignment was due.
- I've underestimated how long a reading assignment would take and didn't finish it in time for class.
- I've relied on the Internet for information (like a summary of a concept or a book) because I didn't finish the reading on time.

If these sound like issues you've struggled with in the past, you might want to consider whether you have the tendency to procrastinate and how you want to deal with it in your future classes. You're already spending a lot of time, energy, and money on the classes you're taking—don't let all of that go to waste!

Procrastination is a way of thinking that lets one put off doing something that should be done now. This can happen to anyone at any time. It's like a voice inside your head keeps coming up with these brilliant ideas for things to do right now other than studying: "I really ought to get this room cleaned up before I study" or "I can study anytime, but tonight's the only chance I have to do X." That voice is also very good at rationalizing: "I really don't need to read that chapter now; I'll have plenty of time tomorrow at lunch...."

Procrastination is very powerful. Some people battle it daily, others only occasionally. Most college students procrastinate often, and about half say they need help to avoid procrastination. Procrastination can threaten one's ability to do well on an assignment or test.

People procrastinate for different reasons. Some people are too relaxed in their priorities, seldom worry, and easily put off responsibilities. Others worry constantly, and that stress keeps them from focusing on the task at hand. Some procrastinate because they fear failure; others procrastinate because they fear success or are so perfectionistic that they don't want to let themselves down. Some are dreamers. Many different factors are involved, and there are different styles of procrastinating.

Strategies to Combat Procrastination

Just as there are different causes, there are different possible solutions to procrastination. Different strategies work for different people. The time management strategies described earlier can help you avoid procrastination. Because this is a psychological issue, some additional psychological strategies can also help:

- Since procrastination is usually a habit, accept that and work on breaking it as you would any other bad habit: one day at a time. Know that every time you overcome feelings of procrastination, the habit becomes weaker and eventually, you'll have a new habit of being able to start studying right away.
- Schedule times for studying using a daily or weekly planner. Commit to your study schedule in the same way you commit to other obligations like class time or school. Carry it with you and look at it often. Just being aware of the time and what you need to do today can help you get organized and stay on track.
- If you keep thinking of something else you might forget to do later (making you feel like you "must" do it now), write yourself a note about it for later and get it out of your mind.
- Counter a negative with a positive. If you're procrastinating because you're not looking forward to a certain task, try to think of the positive future results of doing the work, like getting a good grade or raising your GPA.
- Counter a negative with a worse negative. If thinking about the positive results of completing the task doesn't motivate you to get started, think about what could happen if you keep procrastinating. You'll have to study tomorrow instead of doing something fun you had planned. Or you could fail the test. Some people can jolt themselves right out of procrastination.
- On the other hand, fear causes procrastination in some people—so don't dwell on the thought of failing. If you're studying for a test, and you're so afraid of failing it that you can't focus on studying and you start procrastinating, try to put things in perspective. Even if it's your most difficult class and you don't understand *everything* about the topic, that doesn't mean you'll fail, even if you may not receive an A or a B.
- Study with a motivated friend. Form a study group with other students who are motivated and won't procrastinate along with you. You'll learn good habits from them while getting the work done now.
- Keep your studying "bite-sized": When confronted with 150 pages of reading or 50 problems to solve, it's natural to feel overwhelmed. Try breaking it down: What if you decide that you will read for 45 minutes or that you will solve 10 problems? That sounds much more manageable.
- Turn off your phone, close your chat windows, and block distracting Web sites. Treat your studying as if you're in a movie theater—just turn it off.
- Set up a reward system: If you read for 40 minutes, you can check your phone for 5 minutes. But keep in mind that reward-based systems only work if you stick to an honor system.
- Study in a place reserved for studying ONLY. Your bedroom may have too many distractions (or temptations, such as taking a nap), so it may be best to avoid it when you're working on school assignments.
- Use checklists: Make your incremental accomplishments visible. Some people take great satisfaction and motivation from checking items off a to-do list. Be very specific when creating this list, and clearly describe each task one step at a time.
- Get help. If you really can't stay on track with your study schedule, or if you're always putting things off until the last minute, see a college counselor. They have lots of experience with this common student problem and can help you find ways to overcome this habit.

In the following video, Joseph Clough shares key strategies for conquering procrastination once and for all.



Overcome Procrastination For Good!


Pomodoro Technique

A well-known technique for managing time that can help with procrastination is called the *Pomodoro Technique*, developed by Francesco Cirillo in the 1980s and named after the popular tomato-shaped kitchen timer (*pomodoro* means “tomato” in Italian.) This simple technique is a method of managing procrastination by breaking down your work periods into small, manageable units. The system operates on the belief that by dividing your work and breaks into regular, short increments you can avoid feeling overwhelmed by a looming task while also avoiding burn out.

Here are the basics:

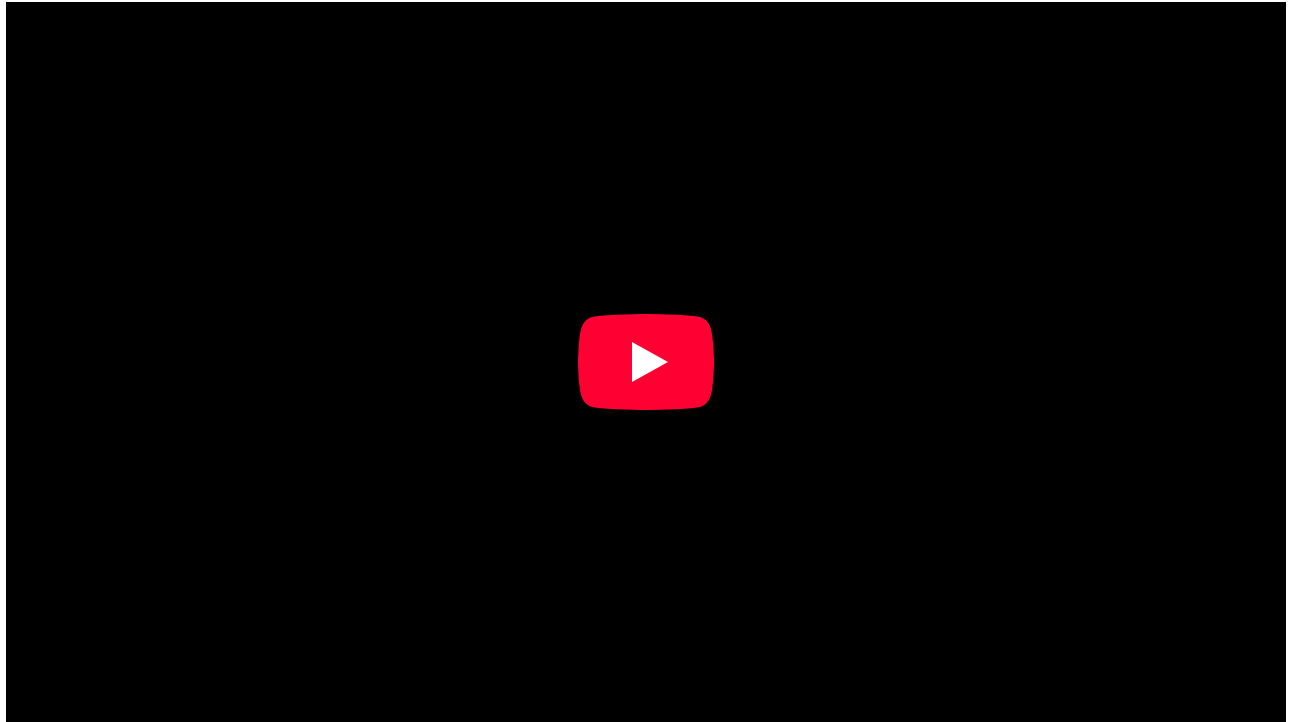
- Consider in advance how many pomodoros you might need to achieve your task.
 - Set a timer for 25 minutes, and start your task.
 - It doesn't have to be a tomato timer. You can use your phone timer (but put it on Do Not Disturb.)
 - There are several online versions or apps for Pomodoro Timers – do a quick search to find one that works best for you.
 - It doesn't have to be 25 minutes, you can tweak this as you get more comfortable with the method.
- If a distraction pops into your head, write it down and immediately return to your task.
- When the buzzer rings, you've completed one increment, also known as one pomodoro.
- Take a five-minute break. You can check the distractions that popped into your head, stretch, grab a cup of tea, etc.

- After four pomodoros, take a fifteen- to thirty-minute break.
- Repeat!

 Chart describing Pomodoro Technique

Give it a try if you're interested in breaking your studying into manageable tomato-sized bites while developing a greater understanding of time management and how long it will take to complete a task.

Watch this supplemental video that explains the Pomodoro Technique.



Pomodoro Technique

Key Takeaways

- Your values help shape your goals and your goals help shape your time management.
- Identifying your priorities is an important first step to creating an effective time management system.
- Models like The Eisenhower Method help you prioritize and avoid unnecessarily stressful situations.
- There are unique Time Management Styles and knowing yours will help you create your own system.
- Having an accurate snapshot of how you currently spend your time is the first step in creating an effective time management system.
- Once you know how you spend your time, you can make a specific plan for how you want to spend your time.

- There are different types of planners, including hard-copy and electronic. Find a planner that works best for you and your preferences and habits.
- Your planner should reflect your values, goals, and priorities. It should include class time, work time, appointments, due dates, exams, and reminders of special dates.
- For big projects, plan backward to ensure you have enough time planned for each step.
- There are several options for To-Do Lists including paper and electronic choices. Find a system that works with your planner and that you will actively use.
- Implement Time Management Strategies to support your success and ultimately support your goals.
- Understand procrastination and the reasons you personally procrastinate. Use this information to incorporate proactive strategies to help you avoid procrastinating.

Avoiding Time Traps

Now that you have a better understanding of how you are spending your time, write a journal entry that identifies your time traps and what strategies you can implement to overcome those time traps.

What is a time trap? A time trap is something you end up spending a lot of time that doesn't support your goals or priorities. They take up your time, energy and focus if you let them. The way to avoid time traps is to be aware of what your personal time traps are and have a plan for how you will avoid or reduce them. We all have our own personal time traps. What are yours? To help you get started, here's a list of some common time traps:

- Web surfing
- Streaming online videos
- Video games
- Social media
- Checking your phone for texts or alerts
- Television
- Sleeping unnecessarily
- Hanging out with friends when there's nothing really happening
- Watching movies from streaming services

Directions

Look at your Time Log from Activity #2. What were your two most common time traps? How did these time traps distract you from your priorities?

For each of your two time traps, come up with two specific plans to effectively avoid or reduce those time traps.

What time management strategies can you implement that can support your plans to avoid your time traps?

Journal Assignment

After reading the above content and watching the above videos, take some time to consider each of the questions below and document your thoughts:

1. Do you find yourself focusing more on getting things perfect or making progress? How can managing your time more effectively help you embrace learning from mistakes?
2. Do deadlines tend to motivate you or discourage you? How can you adjust your approach to support a growth mindset?
3. How do you react when a task takes longer than expected? What do you think this reveals about your mindset, and how can you adjust your approach?
4. What are your biggest distractions when working (or completing homework)? How can managing these distractions help you to stay committed to learning and improvement?
5. Do you often compare your progress to others? How can managing your time effectively help you to focus on your personal growth instead?
6. If you could give advice to your past self about time management, what would it be? How can you apply that advice moving forward?

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