

Utilizing Your Schedule

Effective use of time is one way to find more enjoyment and more success from daily living. Each of us has the same amount of time for each week – exactly 168 hours – no more, no less. Thus, it is not the amount of time but **WHAT YOU DO WITH YOUR TIME** that counts most. Organizing and planning is the secret of more effective use of time and greater enjoyment of living. Wise planning of your time will provide you with more time for those things you are interested in doing. It will help you to balance your student leader position, your studies, and your free time.

Scheduling Suggestions

- ❖ Build your schedule around your fixed time commitments. The most common things for you to consider are classes, work-related commitments, organizational meetings and activities, church, eating, and sleeping.

My fixed commitments:

- ❖ Keep your “peak” times in mind. Are you a morning person? Is staying up late easy for you? You can use your personal preferences to plan your flexible commitments.

- ❖ Plan and schedule times for your flexible commitments. The most common things to consider here are studying, recreation, relaxation, exercising, and personal grooming.

My flexible commitments:

- ❖ Leave some free hours each week to provide for things that will come up either in class or at work. Don't over schedule!

Time Management Hints

1. B

e an active decision-maker. You can't do everything. You can't be everything to everybody. If you have problems setting limits, you can learn to say "no" more often.

2. Your schedule must be flexible. You are aiming for something in between an "anything goes" type of schedule and having every minute of every day planned out.
 3. Leave space in your schedule for the unexpected. If you don't have space, you may need to let go of one of your lesser priorities.
 4. Don't schedule activities too tightly. Allow time between activities.
 5. Enough time for relaxation and recreation should be scheduled so that they are not omitted. These are at least as important as work activities and personal commitments – for your own mental health!
 6. Time planning and scheduling should be done both on a long-range and a daily basis. Major activities, events, and commitments are best planned and scheduled at least two months and possibly much longer (depending on what it is) in advance. On the other hand, minor activities and small tasks can and should be scheduled and modified on a daily basis.
 7. Keep your goals and priorities in mind as you plan your schedule. Be sure that the items on your schedule are contributing to what's really important to you. Review and revise your goals once a month or as needed.
 8. Focus on what you can control. Don't waste time by feeling guilty about what you didn't do.
 9. Reward yourself when you complete important projects.
 10. Avoid time wasters. Have a place for everything to avoid constant searching. Carry an appointment book with you.
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My Common Time Wasters

Only by identifying where and how you waste time can you make changes. Read the list of common time wasters. Mark 3-5 of your biggest time wasters. If any of yours are missing, add them in the blank space at the bottom and include those in the 3-5 chosen.

- _____ Interruptions, Drop-in Visitors, Unplanned Conversations
- _____ Meetings – scheduled or unscheduled
- _____ Lack of objectives, No deadlines, No Priorities
- _____ Cluttered work area/room, Hunting for things, Personal Disorganization
- _____ Doing routine things of minor importance
- _____ Attempting too much at once
- _____ Unrealistic time expectations
- _____ Procrastination, Indecision, Daydreaming
- _____ Inability to say “No”
- _____ Leaving tasks unfinished, Jumping from one task to another
- _____ Getting involved in unnecessary details
- _____ Socializing, Idle conversation
- _____ Playing cards or video games, unplanned TV watching, etc.
- _____ Lacking self-discipline, Not carrying through on plans
- _____ Constantly switching priorities
- _____ Failure to listen carefully to assigned tasks
- _____ Failure to use short blocks of time constructively
- _____ “Breaks” which turn into vacations
- _____ _____
- _____ _____

Peak Times & Procrastination

If you are like most people, you probably enjoy certain times of the day when you are at your best. For example, most people are psychologically more able to concentrate on class-type material in the mornings. By identifying your peak times, you can adjust your schedule to fit your own rhythms and preferences. Which are your peak times? Schedule high-priority or your least favorite activities for your most alert times of the day. Use your mornings and evenings according to when your best times are.

High-Energy Times

These are the times of day that I:

- Have the most energy!
- Feel the most productive.
- Think most clearly.
- Have little trouble concentrating.

These times for me are between _____ & _____

and/or between _____ & _____.

Activities to schedule between these times are:

Low-Energy Times

These are the times of day that I:

- Have the least energy.
- Fade quickly.
- Feel least alert.
- Have little trouble staying awake.

These times for me are between _____ & _____

and/or between _____ & _____.

Activities to schedule between these times are:

Procrastination can lead to failure to accomplish a goal, but more often it leads to a compromise in quality from not giving a task the time it deserves. One of the most frustrating aspects of procrastination is that it rarely improves anything – or makes a project go away. Instead, it hangs over your head and compromises your effectiveness in other areas or your enjoyment of other activities. When you finally turn to the task you've put off, it may have become more difficult to accomplish or it may at least have the added pressure of time. The key to controlling your use of procrastination is to examine your motives. If you are avoiding a task because it is boring, unpleasant, difficult, or frightening, you are probably procrastinating for negative reasons. However, if you are putting off the task because you are attending to more important things, you are probably procrastinating for positive reasons.

Goals

You cannot determine your priorities without knowing what your goals are. Take a few minutes to describe your long-term and short-term goals. Goals can be imposed by you or by others. Your goals should be specific and measurable. In turn, your priorities will assist you with reaching your goals.

Long-Term Goals – What you want to accomplish in the next few years

Sample Long-Term Goal: Earn a BS in Biology by May 2004

Goal 1: _____

Goal 2: _____

Goal 3: _____

Goal 4: _____

Goal 5: _____

Short-Term Goals – What you want to accomplish this month, this semester, or this year

Sample Short Term Goal: Learn to play 5 songs on the guitar

Goal 1: _____

Goal 2: _____

Goal 3: _____

Goal 4: _____

Goal 5: _____

Priorities

One way to rank the priority of each item is the ABC method. Use “A” for your highest priority items, “B” for those that must be done but are not as important right now, and “C” for those things that you could do or not do. You can number your A’s in order of importance, etc. Your first priorities should be items that move you toward your goals.

Time Needed for Basic Commitments

Before you can schedule your time effectively, you should know how much “optional” time you have. This worksheet will assist you in determining the amount of time needed for your basic commitments.

Weekly Time Expenditure for Personal Needs, Classes, Work, and Commuting

Number of hours per week you need to sleep _____

Number of hours per week used for meals _____

Number of hours per week spent on personal grooming _____

Number of hours per week spent on fixed family and household commitments (laundry, cleaning your room, cooking, etc.) _____

Number of hours per week spent in class _____

Number of hours per week spent at work _____

Number of hours per week spent commuting to school or work _____

A = total number of hours _____

Weekly Time Expenditure for Study & Leadership (Reading, Exams, Papers, Meetings, Events, etc.)

Course 1: _____

Course 2: _____

Course 3: _____

Course 4: _____

Course 5: _____

Leadership Role 1: _____

Leadership Role 2: _____

B = total number of study hours _____

168 – A – B = number of hours available for leisure _____