

# Time Management

## Barriers to Time Management

Time management is a skill that takes a lot of practice, and there are many things that can get in the way. Here are some barriers to effective time management.

- **Anxiety.** Anxiety can be a nuisance, but it can also feel completely overwhelming. Severe anxiety can result in avoiding work or school, or even isolating from friends and family.
- **Expectations.** College comes with a number of built-in expectations, deadlines, and examinations. Combine these academic pressures with expectations from parents and friends and it can be easy to lose sight of what you really want. Managing time effectively quickly becomes impossible when you're trying to satisfy everyone else's goals.
- **Perfectionism.** Motivation to manage time effectively decreases when you're trying to be perfect. Many people give up on what they're doing rather than finishing it through and "failing" by not meeting their perfectionistic standards.
- **Distraction.** Society today is full of distractions. Video games, internet, and friends are three big examples. Combine these distractions with the newfound freedom that comes with college life and you have a giant barrier to functioning effectively in school.

While there are many barriers to time management, one of the common themes among these barriers is avoidance. Developing good time management skills is like building a muscle—it may be difficult at first but it will get easier the more you practice.

## How to Practice Time Management

- **Make time management a priority.** Set aside time every week to organize your schedule. Good planning is the first step to good results.
- **Write down a list of goals or objectives that are important to .** Rushing a fraternity or a sorority may be big deal to your friends, but don't make time for it if it doesn't matter to you.
- **List your goals in order of importance to you.** How important your goals are should be the result of several factors: the potential results of doing the work, the potential consequences of not doing the work, and any timeframes or deadlines that you're under.
- **Use your high priority list to structure your week.** Devote the most time to the things that are the most important. Quick hint: Studying should be one of the more important things you do, so schedule set time for studying. Using a calendar or an organizing app on your phone can be helpful here.
- **Once you have scheduled your high priority responsibilities, go back through your schedule and plug in medium-and low-importance events.** If you can't fit all of the low-importance events in, consider delaying or dropping them altogether.
- **As you set a schedule for your week keep things consistent.** It's much easier to develop healthy habits if you've set aside regular and consistent time to practice them. For example, set aside blocks of time for studying each week but make sure that these blocks occur at the same time each week.
- **Don't overschedule.** Your schedule should be a guide for your week, not an ironclad contract.
- **Practice saying "no".** One of the hardest things to do for many people is to say "no". We want others to like us and find us valuable. We say we can do things for others because we want them to reciprocate when we ask. Learning to say 'no' can be a valuable tool to getting things done and in order to maintain a set schedule you WILL have to learn to say no to friends, to relatives and yes even to professors if they ask you to take on extra, ungraded work. If you recognize that your time is valuable, then others will as well. When it comes to time management you really need to rely on yourself to make sure you have what you need. In college and after you graduate, no one will do it for you. Learning to set your own boundaries and say 'no' can help you out throughout your life.
- **Make sure your schedule includes some time to relax and unwind.** If you don't get regular time to relax you're more likely to burn out on scheduling and studying.

## Time Management and Studying

Even the most organized person in the world won't get anywhere if they don't follow up with action. Here are some tips that can help you spend your time wisely.

- **Pay attention to long-term objectives.** Compile all of the deadlines for the entire semester at the beginning of the semester. Using calendars or organizing apps can be a good way to visualize when various assignments are due. You can plan a study schedule for the entire semester once you have a handle on the dates you need to pay attention to.
- **Protect your study time.** Many people in college study if they don't have anything else going on, and then are later surprised when their schedule fills up and they have no time to study. Do NOT let anything get in the way of your study time.
- **Structure your study environment to minimize distractions.** Consider a few things: Where do you study- at home or in the library? What sort of distractions do you encounter? TV, video games, music? When faced with a choice between the grind of studying or escaping into a video game being disciplined can get much more difficult.
- **TURN OFF YOUR PHONE.** It's almost impossible to maintain a coherent line of study when you're getting texts every 2 minutes. Your mind will not retain nearly as much information if you're constantly allowing yourself to be interrupted by your phone. And eventually, you might even come to enjoy the silence.

Like any good habit, time management takes practice before it is established. Occasionally, however, people have problems with time management that practice does not correct. Chronic time management difficulties can sometimes be symptoms of an underlying anxiety, attention, or learning condition.