

Time Management

What is time management and why should I care about it?

Managing time means investing time into deciding what you want out of life, including what you want out of being a member of an organization. This concept of managing time assumes that you have clearly focused values and goals for your work, family, studies, social activities, and most importantly, yourself.

How Well Do You Manage Your Time?

- Do you prioritize things from most important to least important?
- Do you accomplish what needs to get done during the day?
- Are your assignments always turned in on time?
- Do you use your free time efficiently?
- Do you tackle difficult and unpleasant tasks without procrastinating?
- Are you working up to your potential?
- Do you spend enough time planning?
- Do you prepare a daily “To Do” list?

Think about your behaviors with regard to the questions below:

- Do you prioritize your “To Do” list?
- Do you keep an up-to-date schedule book/planner?
- Are you up to date on personal paperwork?
- Do you let interruptions sidetrack you from daily tasks?
- Do you spend too much time on trivial matters?
- Do you wake up in the morning ready to tackle the tasks of the day?

Nine Tips To Help Manage Your Time:

Plan: Start each day by making a general schedule with specific emphasis on one or two things you would like to accomplish including things that will achieve long-term goals. The more time you spend planning a project, the less time you spend running around at the last minute. Use a calendar. Analyze tasks and break them down into manageable parts.

Take Breaks: Working for long periods of time can decrease energy, as well as increase stress, tension, and boredom. Switching from a mental task to a physical task can provide relief. Merely resting can also increase your efficiency, reduce tension, and most importantly, benefit your health.

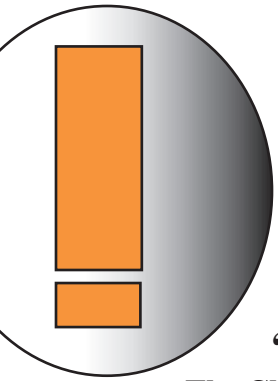
Avoid Clutter: In most cases, clutter can hinder concentration and cause frustration and tension. When you find your desk becoming chaotic, take time to organize. Remember you can only be effective working on one thing at a time, so concentrate all of your efforts on the most important one. Clearing or organizing your desk nightly should be a standard practice.

Avoid Perfectionism: There is a difference between striving for excellence and for perfection; the first being attitude, gratifying and healthy, while the second is often unattainable and frustrating. Learn to say “NO”: Learn to decline, tactfully yet firmly, requests that do not fit with your goals. If you explain that your motivation is not to get out of work, but to save time to do a better job on the really important things, you will have a good chance of avoiding unproductive tasks.

Do not Procrastinate: Decide to change habits immediately, but do not take on too much too quickly. Delete time wasting activities and habits: If you are wasting your time in activities that bore you, divert you from your real goals, and sap your energy, make changes in a positive direction or delete them from your schedule.

Delegate: Learn to delegate the challenging and rewarding tasks, along with sufficient authority to make necessary decisions.

Avoid the Workaholic Syndrome: Do not let work interfere with the really important things such as family, friends, and enjoyment.



Common Causes of Procrastination

- Low tolerance for frustration
- Fear of failure
- Fear of success
- Perfectionist tendencies
- Distaste for a particular task
- Self doubt
- Feelings of being overwhelmed by “the whole task”
- “I find this task easier to do when I’m under pressure”
- Waiting to “get in the mood”
- Loss of desire to complete the task

“TO DO” LIST TRICKS

The Charles Schwab Priority List Method

1. Write down your upcoming duties.
2. Write down a number beside each duty to indicate which is more important.
3. Do each duty in order of its assigned importance.
4. Do not go on to the next one until the preceding duty is completed or when you have done as much as you could for the present period of time.
5. Any uncompleted duties at the end of the day become top priority for the next day.
6. Add to the list.

Time Budget Formula

The following is a formula for budgeting the number of hours in a week against the amount of predictable uses of your time. There are 168 hours in a week. Here is a sample of how one spends his/her time:

# hrs. for sleep/week @ 8/night for 7 nights	56 hours
# hrs. for meals/week @ 3/day for 7 days	21 hours
# hrs. for classes/week	16 hours
# hrs. for homework @ 4/class for 6 classes	24 hours
# hrs. for job/week	8 hours
# hrs. for travel time	2 hours
# hrs. for personal hygiene	7 hours
<hr/>	
Total # hours used	134 hours

Subtract the total number of hours/week used for predictable activities (134) from the total number in a week (168). There are still 34 hours to be budgeted towards discretionary activities. Everyone’s schedule is different, so take a few minutes to determine where your time goes.

There are two rewards you can expect from effective time management...

Decreased amount of stress and Accomplished goals!

Adapted from Leader Bits, The University of Kansas and Getting Things Done, Edward C. Bliss

A B C D Method

A Important & Urgent *Exam Tomorrow *Roommate becomes ill	B Important/Not Urgent *Date with friend *Essay Due in 30 Days
C Not Important/Urgent *Ringing Phone *Unnecessary Work	D Not Important/Not Urgent *Procrastination *Too much TV

*Importance and Urgency are personal values, with importance concerned with degree of value, and urgency concerned with timing.

Overcoming Procrastination

Procrastinators Have...

- Emotional blocks – erroneous beliefs, fears, superhuman expectations, loss of control
- No start-up routine
- Guilt from wasted time
- No end in mind when completing a project.
- Fatigue

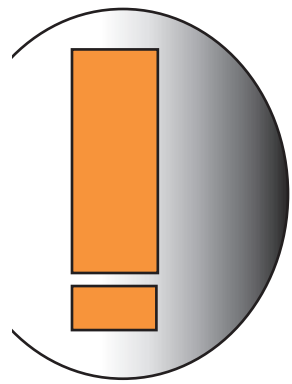
Non-Procrastinators Have...

- Positive thoughts and realistic expectations
- Smart start-up routine
- Stated goal or end product
- Good time management skills
- Fall back plans

Why is it so easy to procrastinate?

Emotional Blocks:

- 1. Superhuman Expectations** – You overcrowd your schedule. You neglect recreation, sleep and exercise. You are fatigued in mind and body when you finally sit down to study. You think something is wrong with you when you become unfocused. Pacing yourself so that you can finish your homework and studies is important.
- 2. Erroneous Belief** – Do you believe that learning is easy? That smart people do not have to study? Then you probably think studying is unnatural. Learning anything new takes time and effort.
- 3. Fear of Failure** – You fear you will not measure up. This is realistic. All of us have fallen short many, many times. To manage fear:
 - Do not deny it, face it.
 - Separate information about your performance from your feelings or ideas of self-worth. Information tells you how to improve; it does not say anything about whether you are an okay person. This is the secret of professionals. They learn how to judge feedback as information, not as an indictment of their person. Professionals use the information to improve, not to twist their gut.
 - Set realistic expectations for yourself. Think in terms of small steps. Do not let a big project overwhelm you. Break it down and start, one step at a time.
- 4. Loss of Control** – It is easy to feel that you have no control over your daily life. Manage feelings of loss of control by:
 - Analyzing what you tell yourself.
 - Becoming a lawyer for the defense and arguing with yourself about unrealistic, unconscious demands.
 - Replacing unrealistic, negative self-talk with realistic, positive statements.



Bad Habits:

- 1. Letting Time Slide By** – Do you set a time to study or work on a project and mark it on your calendar? Do you make daily “to do” lists?
- 2. Fooling Around** – Do you have a habit of planning your time, or do you fool around?
- 3. Misjudging Time** – Do you assume that you can rip through a project in no time at all, and therefore, wait until the last minute to start? Is starting too late a habit for you?
- 4. Unthinking Complaining** – Do you habitually complain about everything you have to do? Some of us do it to get sympathy, but a lot of us do it because everybody else does. The problem is that this thinking reduces our motivation and makes it harder to get to work.

Solutions to Procrastination:

- 1. Start Projects with Positive Thoughts** – Whenever you begin a project, think positively about overall goals.
- 2. Develop a Routine** – Whenever you begin a new project, be it planning a major event or studying for a class, you should have a routine. Some people begin study sessions by reviewing their previous days’ class notes; others use tricks like “putting on a thinking cap.” Remember, the purpose is to form positive habits that dominate those first few minutes and create a bridge that carries you into the project.
- 3. Set a Specific Goal** – Having a specific goal makes it easier to get right to work on a project. Try setting a goal that can be accomplished in 20 minutes and then give yourself a stretch break or reward yourself in some way.
- 4. Do Not Stop Without a Fight** – If you do have a problem getting into a project, tell yourself that you will try for ten more minutes, and only then will you stop. Typically, you can get into it during that time. If you find that you are having “one of those days” and you really cannot concentrate, then go do something else, but not before you determine a substitute time to work on the project.
- 5. Pat Yourself on the Back** – When you have accomplished your goal, acknowledge the good you have done. Make positive and realistic statements about your accomplishments.

Adapted from Tip Sheet No. 19, Overcoming Procrastination, Division of Student Services, Taggart Student Center, Utah State University.