

Time Scheduling

Learning Skills Center, The University of Texas at Austin

Learning to schedule your time is a critical component of becoming a successful student. Managing all of the responsibilities that accompany your college experience can seem overwhelming. For example:

There are 168 hours in a week, and if you must spend

- 56 hours a week of sleep (8 hours are usually adequate; do you get enough sleep?), and
- 21 hours eating (time to eat, and relax, and socialize), and
- 20 hours attending class and labs, then
- 10 of every 24 hours are hours in which you'll have to make DECISIONS about what you do.

This leaves you with 71 hours/week or 10 hours/day for study, recreation, and everything else. In other words, this is not an easy lifestyle.

1. Consider making a schedule. It can work like a charm in cutting down on tensions, worries, and daydreams. Far from making a robot of you, a time schedule frees you from making top-level decisions constantly, thus allowing you to make the best use of your time.
2. Start by making a record of your fixed activities such as classes, meals, meetings, etc. Each week add information revolving around class assignments; note due dates and estimate study time required.
3. Remember these Principles of Time Use when deciding how to spend your time. Many effective schedulers habitually plan their day 5-10 minutes in the morning or before going to bed.
4. Allow larger blocks of time for learning new material, grasping concepts, drafting a theme, etc. Divide these larger blocks of time into definite subparts the length of your concentration span (20 minutes? 30? 10?)
5. As you begin work on each subpart, jot down the time you expect to finish. When you're through, reward yourself with a brief break: move around, talk to a friend, drink water, eat a snack.. whatever is good for you.
6. Use short periods of time (15 – 45 minutes) to review. It's especially wise to spend a few minutes reviewing immediately before a class involving discussion or recitation. Immediately after a lecture class spend a few minutes reviewing your notes.
7. Schedule harder study tasks when you are most alert and can concentrate best.
8. Do something daily - don't let it all pile up!
9. Plan to really learn the first time; the rest of your study time should be spent reviewing through recitation, discussion, making up and answering possible test questions, etc.
10. Don't try to allocate all your time; know what needs to be done and how long it will take you. It's how you use your time that counts.