

Time Management

Knowing how to use time effectively is a skill. Therefore, you not only need to practice what you have learnt but at the same time evaluate what methods work for you and what do not. Effective time management helps to reduce and manage stress, keep motivation up, and allow you to take control of your life.

Step 1: Is to understand how you spend your time right now

Use Table 1 to find out how you are currently spending your time.

Table 1: Time Diary

| Time Diary: Monday to Friday | Average hours daily |
|---|---------------------|
| Sleeping | |
| Personal care / grooming | |
| Family commitments | |
| Meal preparation / eating / clean-up | |
| Transportation (for school, work, etc.) | |
| Work / internship | |
| Exercise / sports | |
| Relaxing / watching TV | |
| Socializing / entertainment | |
| Classes | |
| Studying | |
| Other (please specify) | |
| Total (should total 24 hours): | |
| Time Diary: Weekend | Average hours daily |
| Sleeping | |
| Personal care / grooming | |
| Family commitments | |
| Meal preparation / eating / clean-up | |
| Transportation (school, work, etc.) | |
| Work / internship | |
| Exercise / sports | |
| Relaxing / watching TV | |
| Socializing / entertainment | |
| Classes | |
| Studying | |
| Other (please specify) | |
| Total (should total 24 hours) | |

Adapted from University of St. Thomas. Making a Schedule / Setting Goals and Priorities, Study Guides & Strategies. Retrieved August 4, 2003, from <http://www.iss.stthomas.edu/studyguides/schedule/sched1.htm>

Step 2: Evaluate your schedule

Now that you know where you spend your time, you need to evaluate your time management and think about how you are going to adjust your time according to your goals and priorities.

Step 3: Making a plan

You will need to learn to plan for the year, the week, and the day. Materials to help you include diary, planner, calendar, etc.

Planning for the year

- Note down the academic schedule for St. Joseph's College into a diary, including class schedule, when assignments are due, when exams / tests are. You may also want to transfer this information to a regular calendar too.

Planning for the week

- Use the weekly schedule to help you.
- Schedule fixed commitments first. Start with class and work time.
- Then schedule other activities around them.
- Schedule essential daily activities like sleeping and eating. Try to be realistic about how much time you take for these activities.
- Plan for errands and other activities (i.e., shopping, laundry, etc.), including social activities.
- Allow flexibility, that is, include some blocks of unplanned time. This time can be used to catch up on things or for emergencies, etc.
- Include realistic study time:
 - start by allowing at least 2 hours of study for every hour of class time. Then adjust accordingly to master your material, not just to cover it (include a break within this time i.e., 50 min study with 10 min break);
 - plug your study times into your schedule using your most alert times of the day for studying (this is especially important for difficult course work);
 - set aside 15 to 20 minutes of time before and after class to review notes; and
 - after trying your schedule, make the necessary adjustments to create the best, and most workable schedule for you. Some students do best with a detailed weekly schedule, or a more simplified list of things to do, or one in between.

Planning for the day

- Order tasks according to their priority and check them off as they are completed.
- Tasks that are not completed should be placed at the top of your list the following day.

Ensuring success in your time management skills

- Develop a daily routine – such as reviewing class notes at the same time each day; setting aside specific study blocks of time at the weekend; and specific times to review your weekly and daily to-do-list and schedule. All activities should be labeled as either essential or optional.
- Create a “study area” where you live. This area should be free of any distractions and only be used for study purposes.
- Get a binder for each course, and keep notes organized.
- Ensure plans that anticipate future needs and changes.
- Build into your weekly schedule time to “catch up”. Flexibility is important.
- Plan your time according to how much assignments are worth, that is, invest more time in an assignment that is worth 40% of the marks, than one that is worth 5% of your marks.
- Make sure you attend class, if you miss class due to a sickness or emergency try to get copies of the class notes from a peer and take time to read over the notes and / or talk to the peer and / or Instructor.
- Take control of your time and your goals.
- Work with a friend to keep each other motivated.