

Time Management: Strategies for Academic Success



Take Control of Your Workload – Work Smarter – Be More Efficient

“All I ever do is study ...I can't find the time to do anything else!”

“There's just not enough time in a day to complete everything I have to get done!”

“If I just had more time I wouldn't be so stressed.”

One of the first things that students learn is that there is never enough time in a day to complete everything that needs to get done. Juggling courses, research, exams, and personal responsibilities is demanding and can leave the most efficient among us feeling in a constant state of just barely catching up or always being behind. Practicing the skills of Time Management will help.

Time Management is a key component to academic and professional success. It is an essential skill that will help you to concentrate your efforts on what is most important.

Consider the following questions to assess what tools and strategies you currently use to meet your time demands: Are the tasks you work on during the day the ones with the highest priority? Do you set aside time for planning and scheduling? Do you know how much time you are committing to various activities? Do distractions keep you from staying focused on important tasks? Do you follow a prioritized “To-Do” list?

To improve your study efficiency and productivity, take advantage of these time management tips:

Plan Your Schedule: Use a planner or calendar to keep track of assignments, exams, meetings and other important tasks.

Make a Weekly To-Do List: A weekly “to-do” list will help you to better identify projected time and priority needs. Use your planner or calendar to determine what tasks should be included. Check items off as you complete them.

Prioritize Your Work: Determine in what order tasks need to be completed by listing them from most immediate to least. Remember that more difficult tasks might consume more time.

Create a Timeline: Set realistic goals and deadlines for completing assignments and their tasks.

Break Large Tasks into Their Smaller Components: For example, make a list of all tasks required to complete a major assignment and prioritize it so that each task you complete builds on the completion of the overall assignment.

Avoid Perfectionism: Spending too much time on one task steals time and energy that could be spent doing more valuable things.

Recognize Procrastination & Identify Why: If you find yourself routinely putting off tasks that need to be completed in a timely manner you are probably procrastinating. Some common causes for procrastination include: waiting for the “right” mood or the “right” time to complete an important task, fear of failure or success, poor organizational skills, and perfectionism.

Avoid or Minimize Time Killers: Turn off Instant-Messaging, the telephone and other technological wonders that zap your time. Set aside dedicated time to respond to emails.

Take a Break: Not everything needs to be completed in one sitting. Taking a break will revitalize your mood and improve concentration.

Don't Ignore Personal Needs and Relationships: It may be tempting to ignore or put off things that don't appear to directly contribute to your program, but doing so may lead to larger problems later on. Taking time for exercise, sleep, self-development, family and other relationships is important to your overall well-being.

For more information about this topic or to set up an appointment to work with a counselor to develop an effective time management plan, please contact the Johns Hopkins Student Assistance Program (JHSAP) at (443) 287-7000 or visit our website at www.jhu.edu/sap.

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