

TIME MANAGEMENT 101

EVALUATE

The first step is to evaluate what you do now. What are your habits? What influences how you spend your time?

- ① **How do you spend your time now?**
 - Keep a detailed log for one or two weeks.
 - (Be honest!)
 - Analyze how you are using your time.
 - Where do you waste time?
- ② **What are your strengths, weaknesses, and habits?**
 - Are you a "morning person" or a "night owl"?
 - Do you work best in a quiet environment or a noisy one?
 - Do you let yourself get run down? Do you take care of your health?
 - Do you procrastinate?
- ③ **Who is important to you? And what do they expect of you?**
 - What does your family expect of you?
 - What do your friends, co-workers, or employers expect of you?
 - What organizations are you a part of and what do they expect of you?

PRIORITIZE

Time is limited. Even going 24-7, you can't do everything...at least not simultaneously and not well.

- ① **Define your priorities.**
 - Include all aspects of your life: family, career, academics, travel, health, financial, friendships, etc.
 - Include long-term priorities. If you keep these in mind, you will stay on course.
- ② **To avoid burnout: decide which ones are your top priorities.**
 - Investigate each priority so you know what is required.
 - Be realistic. It's better to do 3 things well than 4 things badly.
 - Keep timing in mind: do any of your priorities come into conflict?
- ③ **Double-check your choices.**
 - Are your priorities your own or are they based on other's expectations?
 - Are you trying to impress someone or to realize your dreams?

PLAN

The more you plan ahead, the less you'll be tripped up by the unexpected.

- ① **When planning, focus on one priority at a time.**
- ② **Break each priority down into the steps required.**
 - If you're not sure what the steps are, investigate.
- ③ **Estimate how much time each step will take.**
- ④ **Find out any deadlines that are set; set your own if there are no deadlines.**
 - Use timelines given to you (e.g. class syllabi).
- ⑤ **Place each step on a calendar.**
- ⑥ **Repeat this process with each priority. Then merge all your plans to create your Master Plan.**
- ⑦ **Adjust your Master Plan.**
 - Know yourself: what is a realistic workload for you?
 - Allow enough time.

Allow for last minute emergencies. Try to meet deadlines early.
Add in appointments with yourself: down-time to reflect & plan.
Adjust the timing of one priority to accommodate another.
Be honest: eliminate something if you are doing too much.

- ③ **Delegate. Don't try to prove you're a super-activist!**
(See Delegation link)

TAKE ACTION

Be patient with yourself. This will take practice, but you can do it!

- ① **Start each week by reviewing your Master plan.**
- ② **Write down a weekly "To Do" list.**
Start with a short, realistic list. If it goes well, add more next week.
- ③ **Schedule each task into your Planner.**
Put important tasks at the time of day you are most productive.
Allow enough time for each task.
Don't cram too many things into one day.
Do what you don't like first. Get it out of the way.
- ④ **Adjust your lists.**
If you have too many tasks to do at the same time, prioritize.
Reschedule lower priorities or eliminate them.
- ⑤ **As you accomplish each task, cross it off.**
- ⑥ **Push yourself to finish your list.**
- ⑦ **Every night/morning review your list and your day.**
What went well? What was left undone and WHY?
Identify Time Wasters: television, interruptions, daydreaming, etc.
Think of ways to stop Time Wasters when they come up next.
- ⑧ **Learn to say, "No!"**
When asked to do something, check your schedule before responding.
It's better for to say, "No," than to flake later on or to do a poor job.
If you say, "Yes," realize you may need to cut something else from your plan.

FIRST AID

If you've tried managing your time and it isn't working, try the following:

- ↳ Break each task into small, manageable parts (something you can do in 15 minutes max).
- ↳ Pick a reward for yourself when you finish the task.
- ↳ Re-evaluate your plans: are you just doing too much?
- ↳ Do a detailed account of your time for one week: honestly identify where you are losing time.
- ↳ Evaluate your surroundings: do you need to study/work somewhere less distracting?
- ↳ Evaluate your lifestyle: are you creating stress by not sleeping or not eating a balanced diet?
- ↳ Don't be too self-critical. Old habits die hard. You will make progress if you keep trying.
- ↳ Stop interruptions: find a nice way to communicate your needs with others. Additional tools:
a closed door, a sign ("Studying for 2 hours"), an answering machine, headphones, etc.
- ↳ **Ask for help. Talk with an advisor, a counselor, or a friend. Don't give up!**