

# Managing Time Effectively

Time management is one of the most important, if not the most important strategy for success

**Why is time management important?** Because managing your time well allows you to take control of your life, stay organized, and reach your goals in a timely way. It also helps manage stress which makes us happier, more successful, and enables us to get more out of life.

The benefit to learning effective time management is that it allows you to accomplish more in a shorter period of time, which leads to more free time, which leads to lower stress, which increases your attention span and increases the quality of your work, which leads to more success. Each benefit of time management improves another aspect of your life and it keeps going in a constant cycle.

## How do you manage time effectively?

**Set Goals:** The first step in becoming an effective time manager is to have a clear vision of what you would like to accomplish. Having “Big Picture long term goal” helps us stay motivated and helps us to determine how to use our time most effectively. Breaking the long term goal into smaller short term goals helps us to make a plan, and breaking short term goals into simple task goals, makes it possible to move forward starting with baby steps.

**Be Organized:** Find your preferred time management tool (planner) and use it. This could be a paper planner, your mobile device, or web-based calendar application. The key is to learn how to use it and refer to it often. Set alarms for key reminders and deadlines and get in the habit of keeping track of schedules and deadlines.

**Plan Ahead:** Schedule it all in to budget your time accordingly. Determine how long your tasks will take before agreeing to take on a task. Consider whether any activities can be combined. Determine if big tasks can be broken down into smaller tasks that may be easier to schedule (such as studying for exams and visiting the library as part of an assignment to write a term paper).

**Prioritize:** Use an A-B-C rating list for items on your “to do” list with A items being highest priority. Refer to this list to make a “to do” list each day, breaking complex task into manageable smaller pieces and completing them. Don’t postpone the small tasks because the satisfaction you’ll feel from accomplishing them will fuel your motivation to tackle the more intimidating tasks.

**Focus.** Are you multi-tasking so much that you’re just not getting anything done? If so, focus on just one key task at one time. Close off all the applications you aren’t using. Close off the tabs in your browser that are taking away your attention. Focus solely on what you’re doing. You’ll be more efficient that way.

**Eliminate time wasters.** What takes your time away? Facebook? Twitter? Email checking? Stop checking them so often. One thing you can do is make it hard to check them – remove them from your browser quick links / bookmarks and move them to a remote folder. Replace your browser bookmarks with important school and work-related sites. While you’ll still check FB/Twitter no doubt, you’ll find it’s a lower frequency than before.

**Avoid procrastination:** Begin with the immediate task at hand which is likely one of the “bit sized” manageable smaller tasks that will lead to a short term goal. Refer to “Managing Procrastination” Tip Sheet and the procrastination remedies at <http://www.studygs.net/attmot3.htm>

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### Build in Effective Study Habits:

Build in blocks of regular routine study time each week

Have an appropriate study environment.

Split large tasks into more manageable tasks.

Read for comprehension, rather than just to get to the end of the chapter.

Be prepared to ask questions as they come up during study, rather than waiting until just before an exam.

Do the most difficult work first, perhaps breaking it up with some easier tasks.

Don't wait until the last minute to complete your projects.

**Read the syllabus as soon as you get it and note all due dates (and "milestone" times) on your calendar.**

Be a model student! (be attentive and participative in class, and punctual, prepared, and eager to learn)

**Avoid Overload:** Include time for rest, relaxation, sleep, eating, exercise, and socializing in your schedule. Take short breaks during study and work periods. Don't put everything off until the last minute (for example, don't cram for exams). Learn to say "no" when appropriate and to negotiate better deadlines when appropriate.

**Stay true to your Vision:** When your "to do" list seems overwhelming and there just doesn't seem to be enough time to get everything done, remember your long term goal and form a vision of how things will look when you've accomplished it. Go back to the beginning and stay motivated, break goals into smaller tasks and keep moving forward one step at a time.

### Sources for more information on time management strategies:

<http://www.studygs.net/attmot3.htm>

[http://www.appointment-plus.com/articles/why\\_time\\_management\\_is\\_important.php#sthash.IKnN6zh7.dpuf](http://www.appointment-plus.com/articles/why_time_management_is_important.php#sthash.IKnN6zh7.dpuf)

<http://www.studygs.net/timman.htm>

[http://www.cob.sjsu.edu/nellen\\_a/time\\_management.htm](http://www.cob.sjsu.edu/nellen_a/time_management.htm)

<http://collegelife.about.com/od/TimeManagement/a/Time-Management-Systems-And-How-To-Use-Them.htm>

To talk with a Bucks Student Planning Counselor, call  
215.968.8189 or email [counseling@bucks.edu](mailto:counseling@bucks.edu) to schedule an appointment. It's free and confidential.