

CHAPTER 17

***Time
Management
for Students***

Full-time and part-time students face unique time management issues, as well as experiencing concerns common to most people with busy schedules. We present some tips that students can use to better manage their time.

PRINCIPLES OF TIME MANAGEMENT FOR STUDENTS

1. Every individual performs better at certain times of the day. You should use these periods when you are able to concentrate more fully as study times for your hardest classes, rather than errands or relaxing. It may require experimentation to determine when your best time(s) occur unless you already know that you're a "morning person" or "night person."
2. Tackle difficult subjects before the easier or more enjoyable ones. Work on one subject at a time for maximum focus.
3. Try studying in short time blocks divided by short breaks. You'll tire less easily and your brain will continue to process information during the breaks.
4. Pick a study area and always use it exclusively for studying. This trains your mind to accomplish what you want to with minimal "start up." The area should be comfortable (but not too comfortable), quiet, have good lighting, and low traffic or other distractions. Your bed, by the way, is for sleeping.
5. Use down time effectively. Have index cards with formulas or anything you need to memorize, so that you can study

them while doing laundry, between classes, or waiting in line. This works well for material that exists in discrete units and requires significant review before it's absorbed. Audio material can be reviewed while on the bus or walking to class. Always carry a book wherever you go in case of unforeseen delays in traffic, at airports, etc.

6. Don't forget to sleep and eat properly. It's easy to sacrifice your sleep, and you may not miss it until you crash. There will be times you need to pull an all-nighter, but making the effort to get a regular night's sleep on a regular basis will make you much more effective during waking hours. Your health is important; eat in balance to maintain it properly.
7. If your mind tends to wander while you're trying to study, keep a notepad with you to record your thoughts. This will clear your mind so you can refocus on your studies. If a particular problem won't go away, develop a quick, mini-plan for dealing with it complete with steps and schedule. Write it down, then go back to the books. (Like an extra book, it's a good idea to keep a notepad or notebook with you all the time to catch stray thoughts and ideas, both brilliant and mundane.)
8. Respect your study time and encourage others to respect it as well. You need to be left alone during these times even if your roommates or classmates feel like partying. This includes telephone interruptions as well. Turn off the phone if you need to. Enforcing time for study will require tact, resolve, and maturity.
9. All work and no play makes the student a dull person. The college student should carve out time to experience social life as well as the academic. All students, even part timers, can benefit from sharing thoughts and opinions with their classmates. Good time management will permit a balance of activities.
10. Plan your day. Know each morning where you need to go and what you need to accomplish that day. Bring with

you what you'll use that day, including lunch, so you don't waste time later.

11. Reward yourself when you meet your goals. The rewards can be no more than an extra five minutes of break time, but they support behaviors you're trying to adopt, and even minor bonuses will be positive and worthwhile reinforcements.
12. You've had a busy day and are exhausted looking at another busy day tomorrow. Before cashing in, do one more task, even if it's just looking at a page of notes for 30 seconds. You'll have a greater sense of accomplishment for the day that you'll carry forward to tomorrow.
13. If you're having trouble with a particular class, with study skills, or some other problem, seek out assistance as soon as possible before the issue gets out of control. Colleges want their students to succeed and most have extensive support systems available for the asking. Don't waste your time struggling with a problem alone.
14. Class time is important, obviously. Make sure you use it effectively by being alert, prepared, ready to absorb as much as possible. You are doing yourself a disservice by attending class when you're too tired or hungover to concentrate. It's better to sleep in, borrow a classmate's notes later, and promise yourself not to miss another class.

Undoubtedly, you are already practicing some of these techniques, and have tried and discarded others. Try those that are new to you to determine if they're beneficial. They can not only help you to use your time more effectively, but will also improve your educational experience.