

Time Management

In a study of correlations between academic performance and time management, Macan, et al., found that students who perceived control of their time reported receiving significantly better grades and having more satisfaction with their schoolwork than students who did not feel in control of their time.¹ In addition to research telling us how important time management is to successful learning in college, it's also common sense. Here are some tips that can help you manage your time in college—and then, be more successful in college:

1. Get a calendar and make sure to record everything that you need to get done—and then, check your calendar every morning to see what you need to be doing that day. Carry your calendar with you.
2. And when I say “record everything,” I mean *everything*: when to go to sleep, when to do your laundry, when to call your family members, when you are scheduled to work, when to read that chapter for biology, when to begin that paper for history—and when to have a first draft done well before the deadline for submitting it. **Why write everything down?** Two reasons at least: (1) Because human memory is limited and you need to write everything down in case you forget to do something; and (2) Because having it written in your calendar motivates you to get it done and not put it off.
3. Plan ahead. Estimate how much time you will need for larger assignments and plan to begin that work early. Include your own preliminary deadlines as well as due dates. Give yourself time for getting feedback from friends, family members, professors, and writing and math, etc., centers and for revisions of assignments.
4. Break large assignments into multiple parts/sub-assignments. For example, if writing a long paper, divide it into parts and then set preliminary deadlines for having each part completed.
5. Make sure to schedule time for sleep, for exercise, for relaxation. One way of handling this is to think of school as a 40-hour-a-week job. If you plan to work all day, you may still need time to work in the evening and on the weekends, but you will also have time for relaxation.
6. Prioritize your tasks. Do what's most important and/or due sooner first.
7. Plan for the unexpected. Don't plan on writing papers the night before they are due. Don't think that you will be able to write two papers and put together a presentation during a week when you're also studying for midterms. What happens if you get sick? What happens if a paper takes longer to write than planned? Things inevitably come up that you don't expect.
8. Be flexible. Don't hesitate to revise your schedule, as needed. If it isn't working out, then change it. And don't get down on yourself if you have a day when you don't get everything done that you needed to get done.

¹ Macan, Therese H., Comila Shahani, Robert L. Dipboye, and Amanda P. Phillips. “College Students’ Time Management: Correlations with Academic Performance and Stress.” *Journal of Educational Psychology* 82.4 (Dec. 1990): 760-768.

9. But also don't go easy on yourself if you procrastinate.
10. If you're having trouble with procrastination—that is, putting things off that need to get done—don't hesitate to seek out professional help from your campus counseling center or student learning center.
11. Learn to say "No" to some things. Obviously, you can't say "No" to course assignments, but you can say "No" to non-school things.

On the following page is timetable of empty timeslots for you to fill in. Every slot must have something entered into it. **Do not ever label any of your time "free time."** Free time is time you make "free." You make free time only after you have taken care of everything else that you have to get done.

1. Begin by filling in the hours that have already been designated for you for some activity: classes; work outside of school; volunteer activities; meeting times for any clubs or organizations you belong to; etc.
2. Next, consider the number of hours you need for sleep. Sleep is important. Your sleep hours should probably not exceed eight hours but also be no less than six. Just be honest about how much sleep you typically need.
3. Do the same for exercise, which is also important to academic success. Schedule at least 15 minutes to a half-hour of exercise each day, whether it is working out, running, or just stretching and walking.
4. You can now see the open slots (hours) available for study and the completion of outside-of-class assignments. In addition to sleep and exercise, of course, you need to designate time to eat. No more than an hour for each meal should be designated.
5. Most important of all, of course, is study/homework time. Expect to spend 2-3 hours of quality study/homework time for every one hour of class time. And that does not include time you will need to spend working on extended writing assignments and other projects. Don't underestimate the amount of time that you will need for schoolwork. Better to be looking at a slot of study/homework time you can re-designate for some other activity than to find you haven't gotten your work done for class, because you underestimated how much study time you need.
6. Make sure to include breaks: about 15 minutes every hour or two.
7. Once you have filled out this schedule, find someone you trust—a friend, a classmate, a parent or sibling, a professor—to look over it and give you feedback. Consider that feedback and make revisions as you deem necessary.
8. Put your schedule someplace where you can refer to it whenever you need to. Remember, however, that this schedule is only a guide. There will be times when you will need to not follow your schedule strictly. There will be papers and projects that require more time than your schedule may allow. But before making any shifts in your scheduling commitments, always refer to your schedule and decide, "Do I have to make that scheduling change?"

	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.
6-7 am							
7-8							
8-9							
9-10							
10-11							
11-noon							
12-1 pm							
1-2							
2-3							
3-4							
4-5							
5-6							
6-7							
7-8							
8-9							
9-10							
10-11							
11-12							
12-1 am							
1-2							
2-3							
3-4							
4-5							
5-6							