

Time Management

LAST UPDATED

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Wow! Look at your schedule...You're taking 4 classes, you're a member of a student group, you have a part-time job, you work out four days a week and you're trying to also have a social life! Now you have to figure out how to fit all of those things together into a 24-hour day. It may seem to be a very stressful task, but in the end, organizing your time will help rid you of stress. But there are a lot of things to think about before you begin. What are your most productive working times? What is most important to you? What can you give up? What are your short and long-term goals? Once you have looked at the big picture, it's time to get down to figuring out your schedule. Different people use different methods of organizing their schedules, but we thought we would suggest some techniques that might give you an idea of where to start.

* When you're overloaded with things that need to be done, sometimes it helps to make a list of everything you have to do. That way you can get it all down on paper, take a look at your list, and figure out what needs to be done the most. Prioritizing your list will allow you to realize what is most important. Try different ways of making lists and see which works best for you. Some people make one list of the most important things they need to get done and a second of some things that can wait. Some people like to do the unpleasant items on the list first. The best thing about making lists is crossing items off when you finish. What a great sense of accomplishment!

* If it helps you, make out a schedule that blocks out time during the day to do all the things you want/need to do. There are sample calendars available for free in the bookstore - pick one up when you buy your textbooks or school supplies. Some people find it helpful to schedule time for the whole week or the whole month in one sitting. This can make everything feel a little less overwhelming because you don't have to get everything done in one day. Make sure your schedule is flexible, though. You never know when a little emergency might pop up. And, don't forget to include time to eat, sleep and have a little fun!

* Don't feel like you have to do everything. It's okay to say no. If your friend asks you to help with one of her projects, don't feel obligated to do it. Be honest about why you can't add one more thing in to your schedule. It's more likely that you will do a great job on things if you keep them to a reasonable number. The more you take on, the lower the quality of each item will be.

* Avoid procrastinating as much as possible. If you work on projects or assignments a little bit every day you can avoid all that last minute stress we all get when something is due in 4 hours and we haven't even begun! Give yourself a little reward (chocolate, a movie or whatever works for you) every time you finish something early.

