

TIME MANAGEMENT!

“One thing you can’t recycle is wasted time” Anonymous

‘Time’ is a precious resource. Each student has 24 hours in a day. As studying often involves meeting deadlines, how you use these hours is essential to achieving success at university. To meet the demands of your studies, work out what needs to be done and when. Work out how to use time as efficiently as possible as managing time is a skill that can be learned and developed in order to promote balance in student life.

This brochure presents some ideas that may assist you to better manage your time. Experiment with these time management ideas in order to discover a style that works best for you.



HOW TO GET THE MOST TIME OUT OF TIME

- Develop a schedule that allows you sufficient time to study.
- Minimize distractions and interruptions. Allocate time to make phone calls, and set time limits to conversations.
- When studying, select the times of day your brain is at its peak performance.
- Keep a time log – know how much time you have. Use a year planner to chart your studies and to give you an indication of when your busier periods are and when you can take time out to reflect, relax and reorganise. Some of the practical things to note on a year-planner include:
 - Due dates for assignments/projects and preparation for projects or assignments.
 - Exam and test dates and also the preparation time for exams and tests.
 - Personal events that may necessitate that you are unable to attend to your studies.

BE AWARE of Time Thieves that steal your time.

Some common time thieves are:

- ☛ Procrastination
- ☛ Lack of planning
- ☛ Interruptions
- ☛ Lack of delegation
- ☛ Social media and networking sites, the mobile phone, email and internet
- ☛ Not being able to say ‘No’
- ☛ Lack of organization and untidiness
- ☛ Bad attitude
- ☛ Negative people
- ☛ Unnecessary meetings

Assess how your time is stolen and define the action you’re going to take to eliminate the time thieves.

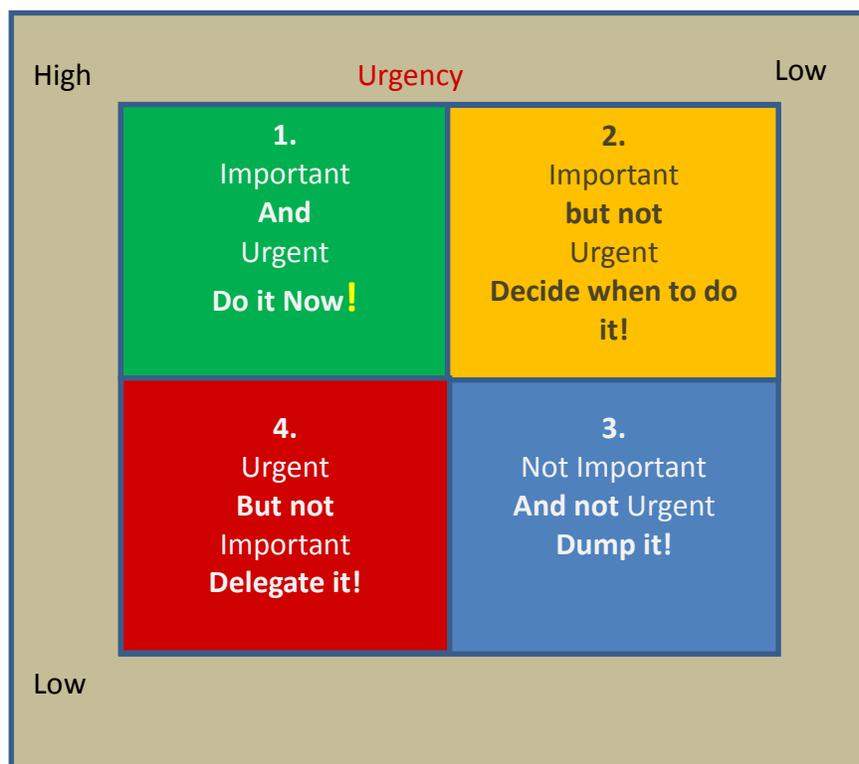
Time Management for Right Brain Thinkers, that is, students who prefer less structure!

Using diaries, lists and year planners certainly assists most students manage time. However, most 'right brained' students tend to think in less structured or linear ways. A different approach to time management and the accomplishment of tasks is, therefore, needed. Consider the following options if this is you:

- **Handle it Now:** If you are not likely to work from a list, you will probably do best by dealing with items as soon as possible, preferably immediately. Always ask yourself "Can it be done now?" and, if yes, do it! By developing a strong "Handle it now" attitude you will reduce the accumulation of "To do's" and will find that you are better able to prioritise important activities.
- **To-Do Cards:** Alternatively, you can write your tasks ("To-Do's") on cards, one per card, in any order. The idea is to give you a starting point from which to tackle your tasks. This is especially useful in giving you a sense of accomplishing your tasks one at a time. As with all tasks, if you happen to come face to face with one that you would prefer to leave at the bottom of the pile, it is a sign that this is probably the task that needs to be tackled first!
- **Do Less:** Scan through the hoarde of tasks you have to do and decide what you do not want to do and should not do. This helps to reduce the clutter and narrow the focus to those that are most important.
- **Mind Maps:** Create a mind map to help you track your tasks. Try to use images that you would usually associate with tasks that require attention.

Time Management for Left Brain Thinkers, that is, students who prefer structure!

It is very likely that in scanning through the tasks that you need to perform, some will come up as both urgent and important. These are tasks that should be prioritised. A useful way of deciding which item should enjoy greater priority is to look at the diagram below and decide which block the task belongs in.



- **Important & Urgent** tasks should ideally be prioritised above other tasks. As a student this includes attendance of lectures, tutorials and labs and your need to prepare for an upcoming tests, exams or assignments.
- **Important but not Urgent:** Tasks that fall into this quadrant are often necessary but do not need to be done immediately. An example could be the need to visit the dentist for a regular check-up. This pertains to your health and is important, but can be scheduled at another more convenient time.
- **Not Important and Not Urgent:** This is simple. Keeping this activity on your to-do list or on your mind is fruitless. You need to discard this from your list of activities and come to terms with the idea that at this point in your life, this task is not essential.
- **Urgent but Not Important:** Activities that fall into this category need attention, often immediately. Ideally, if it competes with other important activities, you should try to delegate it to someone who could assist, alternatively deal with it as soon and quickly as possible.



Effective Time Management Strategies

- Plan each week
- Set goals (day/week/month/year) with time limits
- Set one important objective each day and achieve it
- Keep a study time log of how you study and evaluate how you utilised your time
- Track what you do and eliminate the unnecessary
- Schedule your day but factor in time for the unexpected
- Ensure that the first hour of your study day is productive
- Aim to do it correctly the first time so as to avoid repeating
- Set aside a quiet hour per day for 'me time'
- Develop a habit to complete a task before starting a new one

Managing your time successfully implies accomplishing what is most important for you. This includes scheduling time for socialising, watching a movie, visiting family members, etc. thus contributing to achieving balance in your life which is beneficial to effective study. Life is more than study and work. Give yourself time to explore all dimensions of you and reflect on the amazing journey that is your life. Keep the big picture in mind – value yourself and what you are wanting to achieve in your life.

“ The bad news is time flies...the good news is you're the pilot”

Michael Akahuler