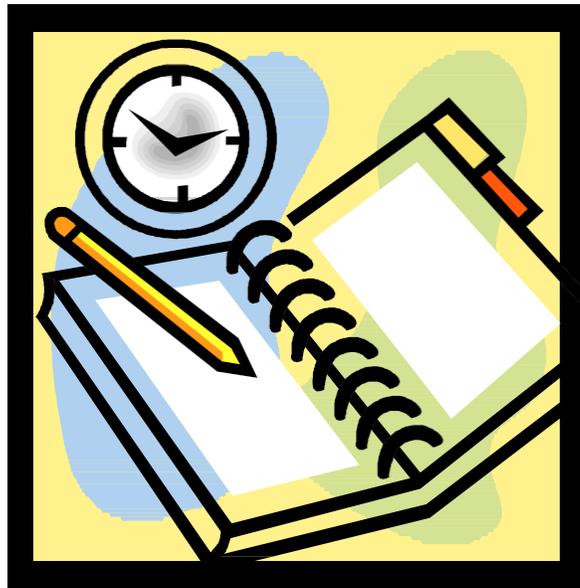# Time Management for College Success

Sticking to a Schedule

What is a schedule?

A time schedule is really just a game plan or written strategy that specifies exactly what you hope to accomplish.

What are the benefits of creating and using a schedule?

A schedule provides a sense of control over your time. For one, when your schedule is written down, your tasks seem more manageable. After creating a schedule, you can see that you will have the chance to accomplish each task because you've allotted time for each one. Also, your schedule discourages laziness because you have a plan right in front of you.

Although it takes time to create a schedule, overall a schedule saves time! You will be able to move smoothly from activity to activity without wondering what needs to be accomplished next.

Essential Scheduling Tools

Semester Calendar/Planner

The planner is one of the most important time management tools. All appointments, meetings, deadlines, exams, quizzes, and activities should reside in one place, your planner. Having these things in one place ensures that nothing is overlooked or double-booked. If you do not have a planner available, you can easily use a blank block calendar available through Microsoft Publisher, example below. There are also several free online time management calendars. Remember-in order for your planner to be effective, it must be kept with you at almost all times!

Preparing your planner:

- The planner should contain all of your appointments, meetings, social activities, and other engagements.
- At the beginning of each term, gather all of your course syllabi to add details to your planner.
- Write all assignment deadlines, exams, and quizzes on the appropriate dates
- Fill-in (using a condensed version) any reading assignments or other course activities that are indicated on the syllabi.
- Some things will arise unexpectedly, in which case you will need to add those tasks or assignments to your planner as you learn of them.

This will give you a basis for planning ahead and prioritizing your time. You will be able to quickly view upcoming work and deadlines and organize your time accordingly. After completing the semester planner, you should incorporate a master schedule, weekly schedule, and daily to-do lists to assist in designating when you will accomplish specific tasks.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

The Master Schedule

The master schedule provides an agenda of fixed activities around which other activities can be arranged. For most, it is only necessary to create a master schedule once per term. On the master schedule you fill-in all regularly required activities such as classes, work, standing meetings, meals, religious/spiritual activities, etc. The remaining empty spaces represent free time that can be used more flexibly from week to week. The main purpose of the master schedule is to show you where your "free" time exists so that you can strategically fill that time with studying, reading, doing assignments, or enjoying a leisure activity when possible.

Example:

Master Schedule

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
7:00 am							
8:00 am	WORK		WORK	CLASS			
9:00 am							
10:00 am		CLASS			CLASS		
11:00 am							Family Lunch
12:00 pm							
1:00 pm		CLASS		CLASS	WORK		
2:00 pm							
3:00 pm							
4:00 pm							
5:00 pm							
6:00 pm	DINNER	DINNER	DINNER	DINNER	DINNER		
7:00 pm			KICKBALL				
8:00 pm							
9:00 pm							
10:00 pm							

Master Schedule

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
7:00 am							
8:00 am							
9:00 am							
10:00 am							
11:00 am							
12:00 pm							
1:00 pm							
2:00 pm							
3:00 pm							
4:00 pm							
5:00 pm							
6:00 pm							
7:00 pm							
8:00 pm							
9:00 pm							
10:00 pm							

The Weekly Schedule

The weekly schedule takes over where the master schedule leaves off. To create it, simply photocopy or print out another copy of your master schedule. Fill in the empty time with tasks and activities for the coming week. This will help you adapt your time to changing priorities. You will want to keep this with your semester planner—the intent is for all of these tools to be used together. Another option is to use your planner as your weekly schedule by using the master calendar as a guide for planning when you will accomplish tasks for the coming week.

The Daily To-Do List

You can break down your schedule even further by creating daily to-do lists. Here's how!

Step 1: Write down all of the tasks that you need/hope to complete that day

Step 2: Run through each task allocating priorities from A (very important or urgent) to D (not important or urgent)

Step 3: Rewrite the list in priority order

Study Time Formula

Do you really know how much time you should be studying? To determine how many hours you need to study each week, you can use the following rule: Study two hours per hour in class for an easy class, three hours per hour in class for an average class, and four hours per hour in class for a difficult class.

Figure out how much time you need to dedicate to studying each week:

Easy class credit hours	____ x 2 =	____
Average class credit hours	____ x 3 =	____
Difficult class credit hours	____ x 4 =	____
Total		____

Additional Tips

- Parkinson's Law states that work expands to fit the time allotted. To help manage your time, apply Parkinson's Law in reverse—set task deadlines that will be difficult to meet and try to meet that deadline. Every time you meet your goal, give yourself a small reward. If you do not meet your deadline, don't punish yourself; you can simply hold back the reward.

- Email and the internet can take up a tremendous amount of time. Try to designate specific times during the day when you read and send email. When surfing the web, you can control your time by setting a timer and returning to your studies as soon as the timer goes off.

- Studying in one-hour blocks of time can be an effective strategy for staying motivated. Try to read, do problems, study or write for 50 minutes then take a 10-minute break. If you have difficulty concentrating for 50 minutes, try working for 30 minutes and then take a 5-minute break.

- It is common for people to begin by doing things that they like or enjoy, however this may not be the best strategy for getting all of your work done. Try to tackle difficult or disliked tasks first. Once difficult tasks are out of the way, you do not have to worry about them as you work on other things.

Online Time Management Tools

30 Boxes

This is a user friendly calendar that provides flexibility. With it you can create your own personal online calendar, build to do lists to go with your calendars, invite buddies to view calendars, and share calendars on social networks. There is also a mobile option for this application.

http://30boxes.com/

Google Calendar

Google Calendar allows you to create events, set reminders, and connect with others. This tool basically does it all. If you already use Gmail, this calendar is an ideal option. Google calendar can be synchronized with many mobile devices.

https://www.google.com/calendar

Cozi

Cozi is an online calendar for busy families. The schedules of all family members can be managed in one tool that also allows you to incorporate shopping lists, to-do lists, and meal plans.

http://www.cozi.com/

Todoist

This is a simple online task manager for creating to-do lists. The free version does allow you to manage tasks on your mobile device.

http://todoist.com/

Remember the Milk

Remember the Milk is another online to-do list and task management tool. You can organize it the way you want and get reminders anytime, anywhere. Mobile applications are available.

http://www.rememberthemilk.com/

2Do

This application helps you create a list of things you need to do and when you need to do them. 2Do can be accessed from your mobile device anytime and will also provide you with simple reminders.

http://2doapp.com/

ToodleDo

ToodleDo is another to-do list and time management application. It is customizable and has many productivity features. The application is available for Android and Apple devices.

YadaHome

This application is a family organizer that lets you share grocery lists and a calendar with family members.

http://www.yadahome.com/

Resources:

Pauk, W., & Owens, R. J. Q. (2005). *How to study in college*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Time management tips. (2012). Retrieved June 20, 2012, from http://www.academictips.org/acad/timemanagement.html

Van Blerkom, D. L. (2000). *College study skills: Becoming a strategic learner*. Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth.