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CENTER FOR STUDENT SUCCESS
CAREERS

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Exercise:
List top 5 ways you waste time

1. __________________________________________
2. __________________________________________
3. __________________________________________
4. __________________________________________
5. __________________________________________

Myths about Stress and Time Management [by Carter McNamura, PhD]

- **Myth #1**: All stress is bad.
  - No, there's good and bad stress. Good stress is excitement, thrills, etc. The goal is to recognize personal signs of bad stress and deal with them.

- **Myth #2**: Planning my time just takes more time.
  - Actually, research shows the opposite.

- **Myth #3**: I get more done by using caffeine, sugar, alcohol or nicotine.
  - Wrong! Research shows that the body always has to "come down" and when it does, you can't always be as effective as during the boost.

- **Myth #4**: A time management problem means that there's not enough time to get done what needs to get done.
  - No, a time management problem is not using your time to your fullest advantage, to get done what you want done.

- **Myth #5**: The busier I am, the better I'm using my time.
  - Look out! You may only be doing what's urgent, and not what's important.

- **Myth #6**: I feel very busy, so I must have a time management problem.
  - Not necessarily. You should verify that you have a time management problem. This requires knowing what you really want to get done and if it is getting done or not.

- **Myth #7**: I feel OK, so I must not be stressed.
  - In reality, many adults don't even know when they're really stressed out until their bodies tell them so. They miss the early warning signs from their body, for example, headaches, still backs, twitches, etc.

Common Symptoms of "Bad" Stress and Poor Time Management:

- **Irritability**. Fellow workers notice this first.
- **Fatigue**. The signs of fatigue are often masked; look at your alertness over time.
- **Difficulty concentrating**. You have trouble completing a simple task in one day.
- **Forgetfulness**. You can't remember what you did all day, what you ate yesterday.
- **Loss of sleep**. This affects everything else!
- **Physical disorders**: ex: headaches, rashes, tics, cramps, etc.
- **Withdrawal and depression**: These symptoms occur when stress isn’t dealt with.
It’s About Time to Take Time to Make Time

- Meet deadlines
- Achieve more
- Have more free time
- Lead a balanced life
- Relieve stress
- Feel better about yourself

Time Management Strategies

- Plan your schedule each week
- Make and use to-do lists
- Make thinking about “time” a priority
- Refer to your schedule
- Post monthly and yearly calendars at home and work
- Be flexible
- Leave unscheduled time in your schedule whenever possible
- Schedule down time
- Recognize “Procrastination”

Other “Time Traps” to Avoid

- Saying yes when you really don’t have time
- Not delegating
- Pushing yourself too far
- Not thinking ahead
- Studying at a bad time of the day
- Studying in a distracting location
- Not curbing your social time
- Socializing at work rather than working

Strategies to Fight Procrastination!!!!

- Weigh the benefits of completing the task vs. the effects of procrastinating.
- Get started.
- Set reasonable goals -- make your goals something within reach.
- Break the task into smaller parts -- tackling the big project can be overwhelming.
- Ask for help with tasks and projects at school, work, and home.
- Don’t expect perfection.
- Consider how you would operate if you were looking forward to something you really wanted to do -- use this motivation to keep you going.

Use Your Time Wisely

- Be focused
- Know your peak times
- Make studying a routine
- Make working a reality
- Keep your schedule with you at all times
- Wear a watch
There never seems to be enough time!!

Therefore, the goal of time management should not be to find more time. The goal is to set a reasonable amount of time to spend on these roles and then use that time wisely.

Simple Techniques to Manage Time:

- **Managing time takes practice.**
  - Practice asking yourself this question throughout the day:
    - "Is this what I need to be doing right now?" If yes, then keep doing it.
- **Find some way to realistically and practically analyze your time.**
  - Logging your time for a week in 15-minute intervals is not that hard and does not take up that much time. Do it for a week and review your results.
- **Create a "To Do" list for your day.**
  - Do it at the end of the previous day. Mark items as "A" and "B" in priority.
  - Set aside two hours right away each day to do the important "A" items and then do the "B" items in the afternoon. Avoid distractions such as phone calls and email during your "A" time.
- **At the end of your day, spend five minutes cleaning up your space.**
  - Use this time, too, to organize your space, including your desktop. That'll give you a clean start for the next day.
- **Learn the difference between "Where can I help?" vs. "Where am I needed?"**
  - Experienced leaders learn that the last question is much more important than the former.
- **Learn the difference between "Do I need to do this now" vs. "Do I need to do this at all"**
  - Experienced leaders learn how to quickly answer this question when faced with a new task.
- **Delegate.**
  - Delegation shows up as a frequent suggestion in this guide because it is one of the most important skills for a leader to have. Effective delegation will free up a great deal of time for you.
- **Use a "Do Not Disturb" sign.**
  - During the early part of the day, when you’re attending to your important items (your "A" list), hang this sign on the doorknob outside your door.
- **Sort your mail into categories like "read now", "handle now" and "read later".**
  - You’ll quickly get a knack for sorting through your mail. You’ll also notice that much of what you think you need to read later wasn’t really all that important anyway.
- **Read your mail at the same time each day.**
  - That way, you’ll likely get to your mail on a regular basis and won’t become distracted into any certain piece of mail that ends up taking too much of your time.
- **Have a place for everything and put everything in its place.**
  - That way, you’ll know where to find it when you need it. Another important outcome is that your people will see that you are somewhat organized, rather than out of control.
- **Best suggestion for saving time - schedule 10 minutes to do nothing.**
  - That time can be used to just sit and clear your mind. You’ll end up thinking more clearly, resulting in more time in your day.
  - The best outcome of this practice is that it reminds you that you’re not a slave to a clock - and that if you take 10 minutes out of your day, you and your organization won’t fall apart.
- **Learn good meeting management skills.**
  - Meetings can become a terrible waste of time. Guidelines for good meeting management are included later in this section.
Role of "Gumption"

- Everything good usually starts with gumption.
- It's picking yourself up, deciding that you could be happier, that you want to be happier - and then doing one small thing to get you started and keep you going.
- Boredom and blaming are the opposite of gumption.
- Stress and time management start with gumption. It's the trying that counts. Poor time and stress management often comes from doing the same thing harder, rather than smarter.

Benefits of Time Management:
- Find more time to enjoy yourself
- Makes studying more enjoyable
- Keeps you from being behind
- Gets you started on what needs to be done anyways

Making a TO DO list:
- Keep it simple
- Keep it accessible—take it with you
- Cross off things when complete
- Let Google help you get organized
  - Add a “To Do” list to your Google homepage go to:

Creating a daily “To Do” list
- There are three very important things that separate effective “To Do” lists from ineffective ones:
  - 1. making a new list every day
  - 2. prioritizing the items on the list
  - 3. breaking down items

- Step 1: On a blank page, **write down everything** you would like to accomplish tomorrow. This includes class readings, work on papers, chores, errands, phone-calls, exercising, etc...
- Step 2: Now look at each item and, if it feels too big to start, **try to break it down into smaller pieces**.
  - For example, don’t write down "study for exam” or “write research paper.”
  - These items are huge and require many hours to complete – and we often put them off because we don’t know where to start.
  - Instead, break the studying down into “review chapters 2-5,” “review chapters 6-10,” “do six practice problems,” etc... and the research paper into “spend 1 hour collecting articles at the library,” “write an outline,” “write introduction,” etc...
  - These items are much smaller, easier to start, and more likely to get done.
- Step 3: **Prioritize** this list by placing one of the following letters next to each item:
  - A - **Highest priority.** Getting these items done tomorrow is very important.
  - B - **Medium priority.** You would really like to finish / accomplish these things, but they can wait if you run out of time.
  - C – **Lowest priority.** Getting these items done tomorrow is not as important.
- Step 4: Now think about when you will have blocks of time to devote to each of these items, making sure you **take care of the “A” items first and the “C” items last.**
- Step 5: **Do this exercise daily:** it is an effective way to manage your time.

| Main Secrets of Time Management: |
1. **Setting Goals**
   - What do you want to accomplish
     - Academic
     - Career oriented
   - Set at least one major objective daily
   - Be **realistic**
   - Make a to-do list

2. **Prioritize**:
   - Analyze everything you have to do
   - Figure out what’s really important
   - Accomplish goals that are important first

3. **Plan**:
   - Buy a planner
   - Develop a schedule
   - Write down all your activities
     - Tests
     - Short-term deadlines
     - Personal goals

**Start Now**:
- Conquer procrastination
- Make sure your first hour of the day is productive
  - This is the time of the day when we tend to be most effective
- Take time to do it right the FIRST time
- Eliminate time wasters
  - i.e. Instant Messenger, Email, Games
- Finish what you started

4. **Reward Yourself**
   **Personal Time**:
   - Make time for yourself
   - For every unpleasant chore—reward yourself
   - Institute a “quiet hour” daily
   - Eat healthy
Four strategies that can be very useful for managing time more effectively

They are:

1. Creating a semester schedule
2. Assessing and planning your work load each week
3. Adjusting your plan each day
4. Evaluating your schedule

CREATE A SEMESTER SCHEDULE

**Record known class assignments including quizzes, tests, projects and papers**

Recording your class assignments from the beginning of the semester creates a framework for your semester. It lets you know when you are likely to have high academic demands and when you will have more flexibility for scheduling pleasurable activities.

**Record co-curricular activities including work hours, meetings, social commitments and out-of-town weekends**

Recording co-curricular activities allows you to have a more accurate picture of how full or open your schedule will be throughout the semester. These activities are important for providing balance in your schedule.

It will be important to update your semester schedule regularly. Assignments and due dates change, so continue to update your schedule accordingly. Keeping an accurate semester schedule facilitates the next step of this process, assessing and planning your weekly workload.

Use our 10 Week Planner as a Template for Organizing Your Schedule
ASSESSING AND PLANNING YOUR WEEKLY SCHEDULE

**Make a list of what you have to accomplish during the coming week**, including class assignments and class attendance.

Being inclusive in your list of school work that must be done for the week is essential for making your schedule work. Everything takes time, whether it's reading a chapter, working problems, or writing an outline for a research paper.

**Include co-curricular activities, work hours, errands, exercise, meals and time with friends** on your list of things to do for the week.

Daily living activities and co-curricular activities are important and provide balance in your schedule but take time away from study time. Preparing dinner and cleaning up afterwards or attending a student organization meeting can take as much time as reading a chapter in a textbook.

**Estimate how long each task will take.**

This is an essential, but often overlooked step in the time scheduling process. Activities take different amounts of time so to effectively use your time, it is important to estimate how long a task will take and allow that amount of time for the task. It's better to estimate conservatively if you don't know how long something will take. If you finish 30 minutes or an hour early, you can use that time however you would like but if you haven't allowed enough time, you'll have to take time away from another task to complete the one that is taking longer than planned.

**Identify the day on which you will accomplish each task, keeping in mind the amount of time the task will take and other things you must also do that day.**

This facilitates the next step of this process, making a daily schedule. By looking at your whole week and realizing everything you need to accomplish during that week, you are more likely to avoid missing deadlines. You can make adjustments throughout the week instead of finding that you have a 6 hour task with only three hours remaining before the deadline. Making your schedule for the next week is a good activity for Friday afternoon or evening, before beginning your weekend. Weekends provide the largest blocks of time for study so if you will have a very full week ahead, it may be helpful to complete some of the tasks on the weekend to decrease the time crunch during the coming week.

ADJUST YOUR SCHEDULE EVERY DAY

**Write out a daily schedule at the beginning of each day.** Include uncompleted tasks from the previous day as well as new tasks.

This should only take a few minutes because you can use your weekly schedule to create it quickly. Use an index card or a daily planner. Carry your schedule with you so you can refer to it as needed and cross items off once they are completed. This last step provides a sense of accomplishment.

As you write out your daily schedule, **assess your priorities.**

Some activities must be done on a particular day while others may be optional for that day. You can use the A, B, C system of prioritizing your tasks. A's must be done that day and C's are optional. B's are important but not as important as A's. Try to
accomplish all of your A tasks before moving on to the B tasks and finally the C tasks. This can reduce your stress level.

EVALUATE YOUR SCHEDULE

Evaluate your schedule in the morning. Ask yourself whether the schedule for the day is realistic, given the amount of time each of the tasks will take. If it's not, remove some of the B and C priority items from your schedule so the schedule is manageable.

Evaluate your schedule in the evening. Did you accomplish everything on your list? If not, why not? Was the schedule unrealistic or was your time management ineffective? What adjustments can you make in the future to make your schedule work better for you?

MAKING YOUR SCHEDULE WORK

Here are some strategies that you may find helpful to try if your schedule is not working as efficiently or effectively as you would like. When trying any new strategy, it is important to practice it regularly and to practice it long enough that you have a way of evaluating whether or not it is helping. Tests are good ways to evaluate new study strategies. If you begin a new strategy after one test on which you didn't perform as well as you would like, try a new strategy until you receive the results of the next test to get an idea whether the new strategy is working for you.

Identify your best time of the day. Studying at your best time of the day, whether that is morning, afternoon, or early evening, will enable you to complete your assignments in less time. Research studies show that what we can accomplish in 60 minutes when we're less fatigued will take as much as 90 minutes to accomplish when we are more fatigued.

Study difficult or boring subjects first. Study subjects that are more of a challenge to you first when you are less fatigued. Save subjects you like to study for later, when you are feeling more tired but need to continue to study to keep up with your work. It will be easier to find the motivation to study something you find enjoyable when you are tired than for a subject you dread studying.

Use the same place to study every time. Studying in the same place each day is like going to class in the same room. You begin to associate a particular activity with a particular location so when you are in that location, you are able to focus on the task at hand more quickly. Studying on your bed or in your bedroom is not advised because you probably associate your bed and bedroom with sleeping, not studying. It's too easy to take those 10 minute naps that turn into 2 hour naps.
Use the library

Libraries are good places to study because this is the only activity we do in this environment. If there are reasons you choose not to use the library, try to find another location outside of your room that provides a good study environment and is relatively free of distractions.

Avoid distractions

Many things can provide a distraction to studying if we are looking for ways to procrastinate. Earlier in this program, you identified your top five time wasters. For the next few weeks, try to find ways to reduce the frequency with which these distracters are interfering with your study time. This might mean that finding another place to study would be helpful.

Use waiting time

If you use public transportation to commute to and from campus, there is probably some waiting time involved. This is a great time to study discrete pieces of information such as learning vocabulary for a foreign language class or memorizing a chemical reaction sequence. Write this information on note cards and carry them with you so you can study your cards during your waiting time.

Treat school as a full-time job

Try to accomplish as many of your school tasks as possible within a concentrated period of time, such as 8 a.m. - 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. If you use these hours either for attending class or studying, you'll have much more free time in the evenings and on the weekends to spend time with friends. Your classes are likely to get the amount of attention they require as well. It doesn't mean that you'll never need to study in the evenings or on the weekends because there will still be crunch times and you probably will. However, treating school as a full-time job and adopting the hours of a full-time job will probably result in better, more efficient management of your time.

Use the attached documents to help get yourself organized NOW!

• Time Management Worksheet
• 10 Week Planner
How Well Do You Plan?

DIRECTIONS: FOR EACH QUESTION, CIRCLE THE NUMBER THAT BEST DESCRIBES YOU.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How often do you plan in an effort to keep life from running out of control?</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Seldom</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Always</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you put daily plans on paper?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do you allow flexibility in your plans?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>How often do you accomplish all you plan for a given day?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>How often do you plan time for what matters most to you?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>How often is your daily plan destroyed by urgent interruptions?</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
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**SCORING:** Add the numbers next to your answers = __________

**INTERPRETATION:**

6-10: Terrible Planner.
You should consider using new tools and processes to help you plan effectively. A great first step would be to take a time management course.

11-15: Below average planner.
You may already have a planning system, but using it more effectively will help to reduce the stress and lack of control you feel in your life.

16-20: Average planner.
Your planning system is working, but you can do better. You may need help focusing on priorities, dealing with urgent interruptions or writing your daily plan.

21-25: Above-average planner.
Your planning system is working well. Keep up the good work, with periodic reviews to be sure you’re planning around what matters most in your life.

26-30: Excellent planner—or candidate for burnout?
You have mastered planning and should experience the serenity that comes from taking charge of your life. But make sure you’re in control of your planning rather than letting it control you.

Quiz written for USA WEEKEND by time management expert Hyrum Smith, Chairman of the Franklin Covey Co.,
whose Franklin Planners, agendas and planning software are used by 15 million Americans.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week Of:</th>
<th>Monday</th>
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