

TIPS FOR MORE EFFECTIVE TIME MANAGEMENT

1. Spend Time Planning and Organizing.

Using time to think and plan is time well spent. There is a saying that states "Those who fail to plan, plan to fail". Organize in a way that makes sense to you. Use your agendas and calendars to mark due dates and do not wait till the last minute to complete assignments.

2. Set Goals.

Goals give your life direction. Set goals which are specific, measurable, realistic and achievable.

3. Prioritize.

The trick to prioritizing is to identify the tasks that require your most recent attention, e.g. an assignment that requires a lot of research and whose due date is nearing; a test tomorrow etc. Concentrate your work on those items with the greatest reward. Prioritize by using color, number or letter - whichever method makes sense to you. Flagging items with a deadline will help you stick to your priorities.

4. Use a To Do List.

Some students use a daily "To Do" list which they construct either the previous day or the first thing in the morning. Others may combine a To Do list with a calendar or a schedule. Others prefer a running To Do list which they continuously update. Whatever method works is best for you. Don't be apprehensive to try a new system. You just might discover that the new one works even better than your old system.

5. Be Flexible.

Allow time for interruptions and distractions. Have the flexibility to deal with unexpected interruptions. However, always ask yourself this crucial question when an interruption comes up "What is the most important thing I can be doing with my time right now?"

6. Know Your Peak Times.

That's the time of day or evening when your energy level is at its highest. Are you a "morning person," a "night owl," or a late afternoon "whiz"? Being aware of your best time and planning to use that time of day for your priorities is effective time management.

7. Do the Right Thing Right.

Doing the right thing is effectiveness; doing things right is efficiency. Focus first on effectiveness (identifying what is the right thing to do), then concentrate on efficiency (doing it right).

8. Eliminate the Urgent.

Flagging or highlighting items on your To Do list or attaching a deadline to each item may help keep important items from becoming urgent emergencies.

9. Avoid Being a Perfectionist.

Some things need to be closer to perfect than others, but perfectionism, paying unnecessary attention to detail, can be a form of procrastination.

10. Conquer Procrastination.

When you are avoiding something, break it down into smaller tasks and do just one of the smaller tasks or set a timer and work on the bigger task for just 15 minutes. By doing a little at a time, eventually you'll reach the point where you will want to finish.

11. Learn To Say NO!

Such a small word yet so difficult to say sometimes. Focusing on your goals, blocking time for important but often not scheduled priorities such as family and friends also helps. Your priorities are important and saying "No" to the unimportant things in life gets easier with each time you say it.

12. Reward Yourself.

Even for small successes, celebrate their achievement. Promise yourself a reward for completing each task or finishing the total job.