Now!

One of the biggest barriers when it comes to time management is PROCRASTINATION! Find the motivation to begin things right away and get into the “NOW” habit. The sooner something is started, the sooner it is finished, and the more time you’ll have for other stuff.

Group study

Teaming up to learn together with friends can have huge benefits not only for your time, but also for the quality of your understanding and learning in courses. Choose a partner or develop a group that is committed to success. If you are really “free-time-challenged,” then you may want to investigate whether computer conferencing could save you travelling time.

How to keep improving

Always try to improve. Just making a schedule is not going to solve everything. Track your use of your plans to re-evaluate your progress weekly. Did you accomplish everything you had hoped? Where can you make a few key adjustments? Asking yourself these questions and following up on the answers will lead to better results.

It’s about you managing you!

Some people want to squeeze more things into their time; others want to ensure that they get good value from their time. Either way, good time management is about good self-management. It is about making good decisions about which tasks to do in order to reach your desired goals.

Time Management at University

Tips to help you make the grade

Learning Skills Program,
Counselling and Development Centre
York University

Online at: http://www.yorku.ca/cdc

Contact Brian Poser

Phone: 416-736-5297

E-mail: bposer@yorku.ca

The Counselling and Development Centre (CDC) recognizes that the diversity of the university community is a source of excellence, enrichment and strength. The CDC affirms its commitment to human rights, and in particular to the principle that every member of the York community has a right to equitable treatment without harassment or discrimination on the grounds prohibited by the Ontario Human Rights Code including race, ancestry, place of origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, or disability.
Taking aim at your goals

Time management is all about trying to find ways to complete the tasks associated with your goals. It makes sense, then, that to manage time at all, you will need to specify your goals. Write out your goals, including: long-range goals concerning your degree, career, and life; goals for the immediate school year; and short-range goals according to your individual courses and daily commitments. Keeping your list of goals handy can help you to make decisions that will lead to the achievement of your goals and can also help you stay motivated.

Setting Priorities

Which of your goals is most important? Which is most urgent? The trick to prioritizing effectively is to allot time to the goals you find most important and urgent. Assign a priority value to each of the items on your “To Do” list and try to work from the most important to the least important.

Knowing where your time goes

Once you see how much time you actually spend on various tasks, you’ll know better how to direct your time for maximum gain. A very reliable way to figure out where your time goes is to track it daily over the course of a week. You’ll find that you typically use half of the hours in a week (that’s a whopping 84 hours!) on sleeping, eating, commuting, and personal hygiene. Your other tasks – classes, homework, part-time jobs, relaxation, social time, exercise, etc. – must be completed in the remaining 84 hours.

Reality Check

Be realistic about planning your time and the amount of time you will take for each activity. On days where you have 6 hours of class, 4 hours of a part-time job, and 2 hours of commuting, you are probably not going to be able to stick to a plan of doing another 3 hours of “solid” homework. Setting only 2 hours for a task that you know will take you longer to complete will not improve your speed and will only cause you frustration. Planning realistically can help you make a plan that you can actually follow.

Take on the big nasty tasks first

Although it is very tempting to start with the easiest and smallest tasks, such tasks are not normally the ones worth big grades in a course or that move you significantly towards the completion of your goals. Get in the habit of beginning with parts of the more difficult (usually more important) tasks.

Break it down!

When you are faced with large tasks such as writing a term paper or studying for a final exam, one of the most effective ways of succeeding is to break large tasks up into small, more manageable tasks. The smaller, concrete tasks will be easier to start and finish than the original large, vaguely stated tasks. In order to keep yourself on track with these smaller tasks, set interim deadlines and link these to appointments with supportive peers, counsellors, academic advisors, or instructors whenever possible.

Get it outta your head!

A written plan can help you through the time ahead. You may find it helpful to colour code your plans to differentiate tasks. Use a monthly calendar to plan out your course goals and to show exams, projects, tests and assignments. Consult your calendar frequently to remind yourself of upcoming deadlines. Use a daily or weekly planner to keep track of your important short-range tasks and appointments. Associating specific tasks to specific times may help you to get them done.

A few minutes here and there

Make use of little bursts of free time, such as the time between classes, on commutes, or while waiting in line. Doing so can help you to recover many hours each week, freeing up time for you to use in other ways. Over the course of a year, small blocks of time multiply into weeks of productive working time. Make use of short lengths of time by reviewing your lecture notes, doing some reading, jotting down a few thoughts, or finishing off any other tasks that you can.

100% Attention

Give 100% attention to whichever task you have at hand! Contrary to popular belief, multi-tasking is not always a better approach. Sometimes, you’ll improve your efficiency, your sense of productivity, and the quality of your work if you focus singularly on one task at a time.