

Organization and Time Management



1 Map Out a College Plan

Pace yourself.

There's a reason it takes several years to graduate from traditional university. You're in this to learn, so make sure you're learning and not just racing through the materials. Be realistic about your goals. If you work 40 hours per week, you will be most successful if you limit your classes to three or less a semester.

Do not overextend yourself!

2 Schedule Your Semester

Resources needed:

1. Find a type of calendar most comfortable for you. (appointment book, phone, computer program, etc.)
2. Obtain a copy of your college's school calendar and your class syllabus.

Enter the following into your calendar at the beginning of each semester

College Schedule	Class Work Requirements	Home and Work Schedules
<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Class start and end dates•School holidays and breaks•Class times, including getting to and from the college	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Assignment due dates•Test, project and paper due dates•Reading schedule•Planned study times	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Work hours•Family schedules•Family routines and obligations•Time for self-care: healthy eating, sleeping, relaxing and exercise•Social plans

Plan your study times wisely

- ✓ Develop and plan for blocks of study time in a typical week. Blocks ideally are around 50 minutes, but consider your concentration curve. Also, schedule studying when you are most productive: are you a morning person or a night owl? Adjust study blocks to best meet your learning style and schedule options.
- ✓ At the beginning of a new course, look through the materials. Break the lessons/assignments into manageable chunks. You might not have time to do a full lesson in one night, so plan for how much you can do, and then stick to it until you're done.
- ✓ Is time in short supply? Use your free time wisely! Think of times when you can study "bits" as when on your lunch break, riding the bus, etc.
- ✓ The bottom line is to put your time to good use and do all of your assignments to the best of your ability.

3

Time to study!

Prioritize assignments

- When studying, get in the habit of beginning with the most difficult subject or task and plan extra time on assignments with high grade values. You will have more energy to take them on when you are at your best.
- For more difficult courses of study, build in reaction time when you can get feedback on assignments before they are due.

Maximize your productivity

- Get *something* done! Details of an assignment are not always evident until you begin. Build in review time, draft your idea, and get going one step at a time.
- If you're studying in greater than 50 minute blocks, take breaks to have a snack, refresh or re-energize yourself
- You'll be more productive (accomplishing more, and remembering more) by studying 2 hours each day than 14 hours during the weekend.

Postpone unnecessary activities until the school work is done

- This can be the most difficult challenge of time management.
- Remember that distracting activities will be more enjoyable later without the pressure of the test or assignment hanging over your head.

Rarely does life go exactly as planned! As learners, we always meet unexpected events that can result in poor performance on a paper, or in preparation for a task. You will need to be flexible with your schedule to succeed in school. *Expect the unexpected*, like a sudden family or work priority.

Maintain your organization throughout the semester

- ✓ Weekly reviews and updates are an important strategy. Each week, like a Sunday night, review your assignments, notes, and calendar. Be mindful that as deadlines and exams approach, your weekly routine must adapt to them! Each morning, review that day's plan and prepare to implement it.
- ✓ Schedule reminders to help stay on track.
- ✓ Post your schedule and mark your progress. Celebrate your achievements!

Creating successful habits is the result of motivation, trial and error and practice.

Sources

Skip Downing, On Course Workshop, <http://barron/uwc.edu/admissions/adult-students/tips>
Study Guides and Strategies, <http://www.studygs.net>