

TIME MANAGEMENT.

Study Guide

» INTRODUCTION

Managing your time effectively is essential for those who need to structure their study time around employment and other activities. Applying time management techniques to your studying will enable you to concentrate your efforts and achieve greater results for the time expended, leading to better progress and helping you to keep on top of the work.

Different people have very different approaches to time management and the techniques around it. Some people find that managing their time comes easily to them, whilst others need to work hard to keep on track. However, most people will experience some difficulties with time management at some point in their life, and it is very common for those trying to balance work and study to find managing their time particularly difficult. Nevertheless, various techniques and tips can guide you through to help you make better use of your time.

» KEY ACTIONS

1. Time log

Time management is really about being organised, self-aware and prioritising effectively. You can begin to do this by monitoring how you currently use your time and then reflecting on how you could use your time more wisely.

A good tool for this is a weekly time log. You can fill this in with as much detail as you need but it should at least give you an idea of how you spend your day.

At the end of the week look at the log and break down what you have done into activities which can be grouped as:

- › have to do: activities with the highest priority. These cannot be avoided
- › ought to do: can some of these activities be rescheduled?
- › like to do: can some of these be postponed?

This will take judgment on your part as you will have to weigh up tasks which have greater importance and have an understanding of deadlines which affect you. Use this reflection to develop a time plan for the forthcoming week.

2. Tips

You may find a number of these general pointers on time management to be of use:

- › draw up a weekly schedule with specific targets for your studies
- › aim to achieve a balance between study, recreation, and other obligations
- › have an understanding of what is required to pass the course

- › bear in mind assignment deadlines and be realistic about how much time you need to allocate to study
- › take control, decide what you want to find out, and then work at finding it out
- › have realistic targets so that you can plan your studies
- › don't procrastinate – there are apps and other web tools you can use to avoid internet distractions
- › use small chunks of time to good effect. Think about ways to use different amounts of time and consider what is the most useful
- › have a “to do” list. List the things that you have to do and decide what order to do them in
- › consider your own personal body clock. Recognise when you work best and try if possible to schedule the most difficult studying activities for these times.
- › learn to say “no”.

3. Control

Dividing big jobs into smaller sub-tasks will bring work under control and allow you to set targets and to check your progress (achievement arises out of quite modest activities undertaken on a small-scale). Having control over your work will also give a sense of achievement and accomplishment.

Organise tasks into strategy and application and think of yourself as investing time in your studies. Some tasks will require intense concentration and need to be done at times of the day when you are at your best and have time to spare. Others can be fitted in when you are tired or have less time. Some tasks, such as essay writing, may need to be spread over several days.

Prioritise your time. There are only 168 hours in a week and consideration needs to be given as to how to plan and use these hours. Think about what activities take up your time, how much of this is devoted to studying and if any more study time can be found by reassessing how you spend your time.

4. Structuring time

Time wasters

Think about your attitude to time and time management. Try to identify and be aware of self-inflicted time wasting activities. Consider how you can alleviate or eliminate some of the following time wasters. This list identifies some common time wasters (these may not all apply to you but they are some of the most common.)

- › **Lack of objectives:** Properly define your objectives. Unclear objectives do not enable you to calculate how long their accomplishment will take nor will you be able to define an effective timetable
- › **Perfectionism:** Trying to get things perfect (this can cause tasks to stack up)
- › **Lack of consistency:** Do not tackle different components of your studies as completely distinct tasks. Don't reinvent your work every time you read something new on the subject as this will cost time and effort
- › **Never-ending tasks:** Divide assignments into smaller parts so that you can control them more easily and monitor your progress. Manage tasks one at a time
- › **Procrastination:** You may be able to postpone a deadline for the submission of work, but if you do this you could find yourself in the position of having to complete two pieces of work in the time allotted for one. Try alternating the more tedious with the more interesting pieces of work
- › **Lack of self-discipline:** Studying is almost always a solitary pursuit and you therefore have to rely on yourself to accomplish your tasks as no-one else can control your commitment or motivation. Try motivating yourself by giving yourself a reward when you complete tasks satisfactorily and on time. Disconnect the internet if you find emails and social media distracting
- › **Displacement activities and socialising:** Do not use these as an excuse for putting assignments off. Make sure you are living a balanced life and consider how much time you can spend socialising and still get your work done, and vice versa

- › **Poor planning:** Problems with planning ahead and balancing tasks are often root causes of time management issues.

» ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

BOOKS

How to be REALLY productive: achieving clarity and getting results in a world where work never ends, Grace Marshall
Harlow: Pearson Education, 2015

Get things done: what stops smart people achieving more and how you can change, Robert Kelsey
Chichester: Capstone, 2014

How to organize yourself, 4th ed., John Caunt
London: Kogan Page, 2013
This book is available as an [e-book](#).

Brilliant time management: what the most productive people know, do and say, Mike Clayton
Harlow: Prentice Hall, 2010
This book is available as an [e-book](#).

Master the moment: fifty CEOs teach you the secrets of time management, Pat Brians
Swindon: British Informatics Society, 2010

This is a selection of books available for loan to members from CMI's Management Library. More information at: www.managers.org.uk/library

For more information on any aspect of study skills contact Content Support on 01536 207400 or email ask@managers.org.uk

CHECKLISTS

- 016** Managing your time effectively
- 150** Handling information – avoiding overload

MODELS

Urgent vs important

WEEKLY TIME LOG

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
7.00							
8.00							
9.00							
10.00							
11.00							
12.00							
13.00							
14.00							
15.00							
16.00							
17.00							
18.00							
19.00							
20.00							
21.00							
22.00							

» MORE INFORMATION

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