

Time Management

Do you ever feel under too much pressure with too much to do?
Do you ever feel disorganized, or that your life is out of control?

Being successful at the university level will require a more careful and effective use of time than ever before. Students will have to get the most out of the time they have, and the key is time management.

- **Time Schedule:**

One of the best methods to use your time efficiently is to plan when you will do specific study tasks, by creating a time schedule. You can easily make a time schedule for yourself by:

1. First list all exams, projects, and papers with their due dates
2. Break large projects into smaller tasks, such as writing just the introduction for a paper or doing library research, and select dates for the completion of each task
3. Identify your body's natural highs and lows, plan to schedule tasks when your energy is high and your concentration is at its best. Save mundane tasks, such as shopping and housework, for late afternoon or evening when you're normally tired
4. Map out a weekly schedule. Label the various tasks A (high priority), B (medium priority), or C (low priority), depending on the necessity of completing the task, and focus on performing the high priority tasks first.
5. Don't forget to schedule in time for sleeping, eating, socializing, and exercise or relaxation time

Some tips when creating your schedule:

- When planning how to use a large chunk of time, it is usually more effective to alternate subjects or tasks, so that in a 4 hour period you should spend 1 hour on 4 different subjects
- Anticipate deadlines and high stress periods (midterms, finals, project deadlines) and plan for extra study hours
- Plan frequent breaks; they help to relieve stress and sustain motivation, but only take 10-15 minute breaks per hour of work

Handling Interruptions:

- Telephone calls- you can always just not answer the phone, but if you must then set a time limit for your calls. If the caller won't let you off the phone try using assertive communication, such as "I'd really like to talk right now, but I really have to study". Another strategy for handling calls is to let the answering machine pick up and record your messages, so you can listen to and return them in your free time.
- Drop-in visitors- set time limits on their visits. Don't be afraid to say "This isn't a good time for me, but could we get together at..."
- Students and colleagues- set up meeting regularly, but close your door when studying/working to help your concentration. Hang a "Do Not Disturb" sign if needed.
- Roommates- agree on a "quiet time" in your room or apartment when both of you can get some work done.

Procrastination:

Procrastination is the avoidance of doing a task that needs to be accomplished, which can lead to feelings of self-doubt, guilt, or depression. This behavior has a high potential for painful consequences, as it interferes with the academic and personal success of many students. Some things are put off for their general insignificance or low value. Others are put off because of uncertainty about what to do or how to do it. Still others are put off because they're extremely important or difficult.

Common reasons people procrastinate-

- fear of failure due to importance or difficulty of the task
- fear of success, because success leads to more demands
- resistance of authority out of hostility
- perfectionistic tendencies, which causes a refusal to try if not guaranteed a perfect outcome
- low frustration tolerance
- depression

Tips to overcome procrastination-

- Recognize self-defeating problems like those mentioned above.
- Identify your own goals, values, and priorities, and compare them to your actions. Are they consistent? If not, what needs to be changed?
- Set up rewards for yourself for completing tasks, these can include going out with a friend, renting a movie, or even a weekend vacation- just be sure to only reward yourself if you have done all the work specified
- Discipline yourself to use time wisely- make a schedule and stick to it

Getting Help:

If you are concerned about someone that is presenting these symptoms or behaviors, one should be aware that there are many facilities and a variety of counselors to help individuals deal with poor time management and procrastination. If you are a University of Louisiana of Lafayette student, and are concerned and would like to speak to a counselor, please contact the Counseling and Testing Center at 482-6480 for more information. The center offers unlimited confidential sessions, free of charge to all students and university faculty/staff members.