

# Time Management Tips

## Long Term

- 1) Plan ahead and **distribute your work evenly throughout the semester.**
  - a. If you have a paper due at the end of the semester, plan benchmarks for yourself so you are not scrambling at the end. Create a deadline for brainstorming, your first draft, and your revisions, etc. Big projects or tests take time to prepare, so if you anticipate that higher workload you can spread it out instead of cramming.
- 2) Be proactive and **create a weekly schedule.**
  - a. Create a schedule that includes your classes, important due dates and goals, study time, and personal time. Display this schedule in a place where you can regularly see or access it. When creating this schedule, plan to spend 2-3 hours of studying for every 1 hour spent in class.
- 3) Learn how to **prioritize your various goals.** If you are able to determine which of your multitude of tasks is most important in the moment, it will help you be more productive overall. Prioritize based on:
  - a. **Time:** This is probably the priority you are most familiar with. Professors assign due dates, and you have to get your assignments done in time. But the more you are aware of due dates, especially ones in the future, the better you can plan your time accordingly. You will have to prioritize immediate due dates first, but you also have a to plan for future due dates.
  - b. **Enjoyment/Difficulty:** It is easy to prioritize goals that you enjoy, and that is not necessarily a bad thing. You just have to be aware of what you are doing. Many people use enjoyable tasks as a reward, only to be completed after they finish more difficult tasks. However, if you are someone who finds it hard to get motivated, start with parts of studying that are more fun to you, that can help jumpstart your studying and make the difficult tasks easier.
  - c. **Mental Health:** Mental health is the most important priority in any situation. If you are going through a rough time and you find you are unable to focus on your schoolwork or other personal goals, you have to put your mental health first. Go to Counseling Services and they can help you. Don't ever prioritize a time-sensitive assignment over your own mental health, Counseling Services or the Coordinator of Academic Student Success can help you talk to your professors.
- 4) **Learn to Set Limits.**
  - a. This is probably one of the hardest parts of time management. You have to learn how to say no to things that aren't a priority at the time. If you friend pops by your dorm, but you are in the middle of studying you have to develop a way to say no. If you find this happening a lot, try to set up group study sessions and then you can hold each other accountable.

- b. This also goes the other way around. Set limits for yourself too. If you don't leave time for things you enjoy, studying will be incredibly difficult! Put exercise, rest, relaxing, and socializing on your daily/weekly schedule.

## In the Moment

- 1) **Create a to-do list.** This is probably the simplest and most important way that you can increase your productivity. Based on the prioritizations listed in the long-term section, create a list of the most important things that need to happen during your studying time, ranking them from most important to least important.
  - a. Don't just keep the list in your head, create a list somewhere either on your phone or computer, or create a physical list.
  - b. Some to-do list apps: Any.do (integrates with Google and Apple calendars), Remember the Milk, Habitica (turn it into a small game)
- 2) **Schedule a 15-20 minute break for yourself every 1 or 2 hours.** Studies have shown that if you try to work straight through for more than 2 hours, your chances of retaining information go down significantly.
  - a. Your break should involve you doing something different than how you were studying. If you were studying on your computer, don't play a game on your phone; maybe go for a walk outside. If you were working on a hand-on engineering project, don't go play with legos in your dorm, maybe play a game on your phone. You want to work a different part of our brain and body on your breaks. It helps you come back to a task refreshed.
- 3) Within your 1-2 hour study blocks, try using the **Pomodoro Method**. This is a method developed by Francesco Cirillo in the 1990s; it is a type of time management that breaks your studying down in 25 minute segments with 5 minute breaks in between. This method forces you to **break up your tasks into manageable segments**. It has been proven to increase concentration and productivity.
  - a. Go to pomofocus.io, which has a built-in timer for you to use. You can set it to auto-start your breaks and you can even add tasks to accomplish!
  - b. Our friends at CSU Long Beach have also created another version of the Pomodoro timer with references and some background music.  
(<https://home.csulb.edu/~026340182/htdocs/studyclock/>)
- 4) **Identify your biggest time-wasters and distractions**, and work to limit them. These will be different for everybody, but there are some common ones, like texting, scrolling social media, or socializing. Sadly, there is no quick fix for curbing these time-wasters during studying time, but the more you are aware of them the better you can be in terms of limiting them to your break times. Here are a few methods you can use:
  - a. Simply turn off your phone during study hours
  - b. Try a social media-limiting app, like Moment, Flipdapp, or Offtime
  - c. Add a minute to your study time each time you notice that you are engaging in a time-wasting activity
  - d. Create a reward for yourself if you go a whole study session without a distraction
- 5) If you find yourself unable to focus on a task, try **pivoting** to something familiar, or something excites you in the moment. If you are just going in circles on an assignment that is feeling

impossible, that can be a time waster too. Sometimes the best laid plans just don't work, and being able to pivot is an important skill to learn.

- a. If you are feeling creative, pivot to a writing or hands-on assignment.
  - b. If you are feeling focused, try studying for an exam.
  - c. If you are feeling like you are close to figuring out an assignment, go back to a previous step and review your work, this might jog your thinking.
  - d. If everything feels hard, seek some help by talking to your professor or scheduling time to meet with a tutor.
- 6) Don't be afraid to ask for help. College is hard and so many people are here to help you through it.
- a. If you want to talk about learning goals, study tips, or anything related to tutoring or academic support, reach out to [Erika Nelson](#), the Coordinator of Student Academic Support, she is also the head of [Tutoring Services](#).
  - b. If you need help with your course plan, graduation requirements, or general university knowledge and support, contact [Katie Hansen](#) or [Krystal Loera](#), the [University Advisors](#).
  - c. If you need support for a disability or you want to discuss campus accessibility, neurodiversity, or testing/learning accommodations, contact [Siobhan Case](#) or [Mara Winchell](#) at [Accessibility and Disability Services](#).
  - d. If you are feeling stressed, overwhelmed, or you are looking for counseling, the [CAPS](#) counselors, Ian Wallace and Mira Elwell are here for you! Visit Student Health or call 707-654-1170 to make an appointment or attend their drop-in hours every day from 2-3pm.