

Getting Organized

Okay, now that you've got yourself motivated with clear goals, what next? Gather your resources and get organized. In academic work, as in life, it's good to have a plan. First, determine what resources you have and then plan to use them wisely.

Campus Resources

Check out the resources you have available through your college. As a student, you should take full advantage of the following resources:

- Student services. Although each campus is different, most offer:
 - Academic advising
 - Career counseling
 - Financial aid
 - Personal counseling
- Libraries
- Learning Centers
- Computers and networks
- Instructors (instead of viewing your instructor as someone to appease in order to get a decent grade, think of him or her as someone working towards your success).
- Other students (get to know your fellow students. Not only are they good study partners, but will likely become some of your closest friends through life).

Instructors as resources

Your teachers and instructors are a very valuable resource. Most teachers and instructors did not choose their profession for the money they can earn. They chose it because they enjoy seeing their students grow and learn. If they see you interested in learning, your instructors will go the extra mile to ensure your success. Here are some guidelines for getting the most from your instructors:

Do ask questions, like:

1. How do I really learn about this subject and not just memorize?
2. I'm having trouble understanding... could you please explain it to me?
3. I'd like to learn more about this subject . . . any suggestions?
4. What can I do for extra credit?
5. How do you suggest I study for this test?
6. I want to do well in your class. Please let me know the areas I need to work on to improve.
7. When would be the best time to meet with you outside of class?

8. How did you become a (fill in subject) instructor?

Do not make excuses like:

1. I hate this subject.
2. I forgot.
3. I didn't have the time do it.
4. I was too busy.
5. I had a _____ (game, a play, a party, a date, etc.)
6. I didn't think it was required.
7. When was it due?
8. I did my assignment, but lost it (... or the classic: the dog ate it.)
9. My computer crashed ... (or my Internet connection was down, etc.)

Adapted from **101 Ways to Get Straight A's**.

Time Management

If you love life, then you must love time, for that's the stuff life's made of.

Henry David Thoreau
Quoted in Luckie & Wood, 1998

College students often juggle school, work and family obligations. Time management can help you accomplish more in less time. Know yourself and be realistic in planning your time schedules. Effective time management involves scheduling your time over a particular period - by the day, week, month, and quarter/semester. Each type of planning (day, week, month, quarter/semester) has its own purpose. Daily and weekly planning help you organize for the short-term. Monthly and quarterly/semester planning help you meet your long-term goals and obligations.

You don't need to run out and buy an elaborate and expensive day planner. All you need a working printer (with paper) attached to the computer you are using.

Planning a Successful Time Schedule

Here are some hints for planning a time schedule:

1. Balance activities i.e. family, friends, social events, sports, recreation, etc. There are many facets to college life and balance is important to success.
2. Allow enough study time for each subject. The common formula is three hours of study per week, per course credit. Multiply your credit load by three to get an idea of how much time you should spend studying.
3. Study at a regular time in a regular place. Knowing what and when you are going to study saves time.
4. Commit yourself to a specific task. For example, commit yourself to "complete the math assignment" that is due before the next class session.
5. Study as soon after your lecture as possible. Studying for one hour right after class is more effective than spending several hours days later. Review and organize your lecture notes while they are fresh in your mind.
6. Start assignments while your memory of the assignment is still accurate.
7. Utilize odd hours during the day for studying. The scattered one or two-hour free periods between classes are easily wasted. Using this time to review notes from a class just finished results in free time later in the week.
8. Limit your blocks of study time to two hours on any one course. Take a break. Then, if you still have time, study something else.
9. Trade time. Don't steal it. When unexpected events arise that use up study time, decide immediately when you can make up the missed study time. Adjust your schedule accordingly.
10. Schedule time for review. A regular weekly period used to review your coursework helps keep you up to date. This review should be cumulative, covering all the work done thus far in the quarter. Such reviews reduce the need for "cramming" later.
11. Keep organized notes on lectures and assignments. Watch for key ideas in lectures and express them in your own words. Record exactly what assignments are made and when they are due.
12. Try to improve your study efficiency. The [SQ3R Reading Method](#) can be used to improve your study skills.

13. Prioritize. Make a daily or weekly list of what needs to get done, from most important to least important.
14. Don't forget to schedule some time to **relax**.

Step 1 - Get an overview of the Quarter/Semester

Before you get too far, it's a good idea to check all your commitments for a particular quarter or semester. [Download and fill out the Quarter/Semester Course Requirement Planner](#). Use this form to summarize your classes and the work they require.

Consider your outside commitments, such as, work, commuting and family obligations. Do you have any time conflicts? Do you have enough time and energy to comfortably manage a full workload? If not, then determine where you can cut back. You may be better off postponing a class than trying to do too much.

Step 2 - Plan your Quarterly/Semester Calendar

Now that you have finalized your classes, plan for the entire quarter or semester. The quarter/semester calendar gives you a clear picture of when to:

- Study for exams
- Begin preparation of papers and/or projects
- Take time off for holidays or vacations
- Attend special activities or events

To put this schedule together you will need:

1. Outlines or a syllabus for each of your classes
2. [Monthly calendar pages for the Quarter/Semester](#) (or use the WebCT Calendar)
3. A writing implement, if you are working on paper

Now record the following onto the months that cover the Quarter/Semester:

1. Exam dates, times and locations
2. Due dates for assignments, such as presentations, projects, papers, etc.
3. Holidays or days off
4. Any special events your want to attend

Now work backwards. From your exams and due dates, project back how much time you will need to study and prepare your assignments. For larger projects, such as a term paper, you may need to

break up the work into stages, such as selecting a topic, doing research, planning an outline, writing an initial draft, getting feedback, and finalizing the draft. It will help to draw arrows back through the days you'll be working on these various stages.

Post your calendar where you can see it. Get into the habit of looking at your calendar so you know what all's coming up. By looking ahead, you will be better prepared.

Step 3 - Plan your Weekly/Daily Schedules

You are now ready to plan your weekly and daily schedules. You can [download and print out the Weekly Schedule Planner form](#). Next fill in the following:

1. Class and lab times in appropriate day/hour blocks. If possible, include time to preview your notes before each class and review after class
2. Travel times, if you are a commuter.
3. Meal times
4. Regularly scheduled activities and other commitments such as employment, athletics, childcare and family/household obligations
5. Times to recreate and relax
6. Using your Quarter/Semester schedule, pencil in the times/days you'll need to prepare for various deadlines and assignments
7. Time for the unexpected (beware of packing your schedule too tightly)

You should also include a list of tasks to accomplish, such as, "choose paper topic." These lists might be on a daily and/or weekly basis.

When Schedules Go Haywire

The best laid plans of mice and men oft go awry.

Robert Burns

Adapted from the poem "To a Mouse."

Life is full of unexpected twists and turns. Unforeseen events can throw off our carefully planned schedules. People get sick. Cars break down. Computers choose the absolute worst times to crash. Here are some strategies for dealing with the unexpected:

1. Don't panic. Try to remain calm and think rationally.
2. Make a list of priorities. Separate out items that have to be completed from those that can wait.
3. Try to "switch" or "rotate" things around so you can address your highest priorities.
4. Don't sacrifice yourself to your schedule. Remember to eat, sleep and relax. Getting stressed out won't help your concentration or performance.
5. If need be, talk to your instructors and employers. Most people are reasonable during extraordinary times and will try to accommodate you. However, use this strategy sparingly. Otherwise, you might not be taken seriously.

Online Time Management Resources:

- [BYU Counseling Center - Managing your time](#)
- [Time Management for University Students](#)
- [Time Management](#)
- [Time Management Tips](#)
- [Time Management: Manage yourself, not your time](#)