

# Time Management

GO FROM THIS ...TO THIS!



Part of time management is knowing yourself and your personal work style. If you lean towards a naturally organized persona, then a calendar with hourly allotments may be best for you. If you prefer to be more flexible in your day, you might want to make a to do list and check things off as you go. Successful time management skills help to reduce stress and make more time for the most important aspects of your life.

However, time management can only be performed within a 24 hour range. Try as we might, we cannot manage to squeeze in another hour into the day. Within your day, start by writing down the time wasters. Is it AIM? Facebook? Net surfing? General procrastination? Figure out which ones can go and which ones are important in your life. Maybe AIM allows you to keep in touch with family, so it actually saves time from a long phone conversation. Once you have identified time wasters, what are you going to do with that extra time? Instead of filling it with other time wasters, make sure you have a plan of what is not in your life that you want to add or what needs more attention.

Time management tools allow you to keep track of your commitments on an ongoing basis. A Day-Minder can be found at the bookstore along with most retail outlets that stock office supplies. Microsoft's Outlook (and web access) allows you to update your calendar from any computer with internet access. There is a to do list with pop up reminders. This also allows other people within your organization to see your availability if you choose.

Once you have established a routine, stick to it ruthlessly. If somebody schedules a meeting on Wednesday afternoon and that is your work out time, be honest and let that person know you are not available during that time as opposed to squeezing in just one more meeting.

To evaluate how you are spending your time, make a pie chart with 24 slices and shade in the number of hours you spend performing each activity. If you have a long daily commute or anything else measurable, you will want to shade that in as well. Notice where most of your hours are going and figure out what adjustments you want to make. Most students will want to aim at 7-8 hours of sleep per night, an hour for exercise, 2-3 homework hours, socialization/eating (can you multitask this?),

Be sure to give yourself a break as needed. You can always schedule in some unstructured free time during your day to ensure that you have a break to be silly or net surf.

In the end, everybody has to manage their time in a way that makes them happy. If you cannot stand structure, then just go with the bare minimum that allows you to be on time to meetings and still get your tasks accomplished.