

# Tips for Time Management

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- Plan ahead and set a schedule
  - Be both strict and flexible: Work when you plan to do so, but be willing to substitute another high-priority task when you cannot focus on what you had planned to work on.
  - Include both free time (socializing and media use) and cushion time (extra hours for unpredicted circumstances) in your planned schedule.
    - Try to avoid unscheduled social and media time as much as possible.
    - Decide ahead of time who/what is worth breaking your schedule for and who/what is not.
    - Schedule a few hours for catching up once a week. If you are all caught up, use this time to reward yourself with a break (or, if you are really motivated, use it to get ahead for next week!).
  - Be accountable to someone.
    - Share your schedule with a friend and ask him/her to check in with you later to make sure you followed it.
    - Know when you need to be held the most accountable. Early mornings? Evenings? Arrange to meet someone at a designated time to help keep you on track.
- Be realistic: As you adjust to a new study schedule, keep track of how long you estimate a task will take and compare it to how long it actually takes. Also keep track of which ways of studying are the most efficient and which ones take up time, but do not



seem to add much value. Finally, keep track of ways that you wasted your time. Adjust your future schedules accordingly.

- Use alarms or timers to monitor both work time and breaks.
- Prioritize
  - Learn how to say no. Think about what you value (e.g. learning more, networking, social support, helping others), and make decisions based on what you are getting out of participating in various activities.
  - Categorize tasks and activities by importance. For example, make three categories: *Absolutely need to*, *would be really helpful*, and *would be great to get to if only I never needed to sleep*. Help yourself prioritize and plan (and feel less guilt) by assigning each task to one of those categories.
  - Limit “going down the rabbit hole.” Before you Google something, click on a link, or look up something else in the textbook, ask yourself, “Will this help me understand/remember what I need to learn right now? Do I have time?” Write down what you would like to spend more time on later, and do it at a dedicated time that you build into your schedule.
- Monitor your procrastination and concentration.
  - Know your red flags when it comes to procrastinating and losing focus. Have a plan built into your regarding what you will do (e.g. take a 5 minute break to get some air, switch tasks, run up and down the stairs) when you notice a red flag.
- Breaks
  - Make sure a break is really a break – stand up, get some air, get moving, even for a minute or two.
  - Checking social media is usually not the relaxing break that you need, and can often lead to wasting time. Instead, build in both breaks and social media checks into your schedule.



- Know and care for your body
  - Keep track of how much sleep you need and when you are most alert. Plan your schedule accordingly (as much as you can).
  - Understand and respond to your body's cues that it is hungry, needs caffeine, needs a break, etc. Put meals, snacks, etc. into your schedule, and be aware of what you need to bring with you for a study session.
  - Exercise, sunlight, and fresh air support learning, mood, and memory. Make sure you get some of each daily, even if it is just a brief walk or a five-minute break outside.
- Multi-task thoughtfully and share tasks when you can
  - For example, listen to an audio review while driving or cleaning, watch a lecture while at the gym, or share shopping/cooking tasks with a classmate.
  - Always carry flashcards, review sheets, etc. so you can review if you need to wait unexpectedly.
  - However, keep in mind that there are times when you need your sanctuary. If working out is your break from school, then do not pressure yourself to keep studying. Planning ahead and sticking to a regular study schedule will help you avoid guilt and anxiety when you do take a break.
- Enlist help
  - Talk to friends and family about your schedule, and why it is important to stick to it. Let them know the best times to call you or try to schedule time with you. Ask who would be interested in spending time with you by helping you out, such as quizzing you or allowing you to teach them a lesson on a topic you need to learn.



If you need help with time management or would like assistance in fine-tuning your schedule, make an appointment with your Education Specialist!