



CSU Learning Skills: *your link to success*

Managing self

How to manage myself as a student

Time management is a personal matter; however, the decisions you make about your time-use will have implications for your work, recreation, family life, community involvement and, of course, how you experience your university studies.

What every student should know

You have 168 hours in a week and need:

- 56 hours of sleep (7-8 hours each night are usually adequate)
- 8 – 10 hours of independent study for each enrolled subject

Ten out of every 24 hours are hours in which you'll have to make decisions about what to do.

In principle, when deciding how to allocate your precious time:

- Plan regularly, say once each week
- Allow adequate chunks of time for learning new material, understanding theories and concepts, or drafting an assignment
- Break large tasks into a number of sub-tasks
- Remember that 20-30 minutes is the average concentration span
- Use short periods (15 minutes) when beginning or ending a scheduled study session to review previous learning
- Arise 15 minutes earlier and go to bed 15 minutes later each day
- Reward yourself for achieving daily and/or weekly study goals
- Timetable more challenging tasks for when you are most alert and able to concentrate
- Study regularly – daily if possible
- Be task orientated. Rather than just allocating 2 hours study each night, be specific about the study tasks to be done within the time available
- Set achievable study goals

Time audit

You may benefit from conducting a survey of how you currently use your time. Completing the table below can give you a more accurate estimate of the time you spend in typical activities and your time wasters each week.

Calculate the following:

1.	Number of hours of sleep each night		x7 =	
2.	Number of hours of personal grooming		x7 =	
3.	Number of hours travelling		x7 =	
4.	Number of hours for regular functions (e.g. sport, community, clubs)		x7 =	
5.	Number of hours of work		x7 =	
6.	Number of hours socialising		x7 =	
7.	Other		x7 =	
	Add up the totals			
	Subtract the total from 168 hours			
	<i>The hours remaining are the hours you have allowed for study</i>			

What did you learn about your time-use? Are you satisfied that you have sufficient time to dedicate to study? Do you need to lighten your load? Learn how to say no? More clearly identify your priorities?

Taking time to plan

Your time is limited and valuable so it makes sense to use the available time wisely. This is where a schedule/timetable can be useful. Creating a timetable can assist you by:

- Lessening any worrying about whether you have enough time
- Increasing your sense of control and flexibility
- Enabling you to align your time-use choices with your priorities
- Providing you with a basis for measuring your progress towards goals and priorities
- Allowing you to reflect on your time management and adjust according to insights.

Managing your study time

When developing your timetable for independent study consider the following:

- For each subject you are enrolled in allocate 8 – 10 hours study each week
- Begin major projects ahead of time – break the task into a number of sub-tasks
- Be realistic – for example if you are a ‘night owl’ planning to study in the early morning may be unrealistic
- Generally organise your timetable into 50 minutes study periods with 10 minutes breaks
- Be specific about what you want to achieve in each study period
- Be familiar with flexible reading techniques, such as surveying, for efficient study

Tools to help you plan

Planning sheets are available from our Learning Skills website for use when you are developing your study timetable:

- [6-month Wall Planner](#) (MS Word document)
- [Monthly calendars](#) for study planning: July-December 2008 (MS Excel document)
- [Weekly Study planner](#) (1-page pdf)

Start with the wall planner and list every due date for all assessment tasks for all your subjects. Include any important personal and/or work commitments occurring during the study session. Display your wall planner prominently in your study area. This provides you with your 'big picture' plan for the full study session.

You can use the monthly calendars in the same way as a wall planner if you need the additional space for recording more detailed information.

Finally, on the weekly study planner list the time and tasks for your study periods during the week, making these study times relevant to your assessment tasks.

Assignment planning

To meet an assignment deadline, some backward planning can be helpful. Backward planning requires you to identify the stages involved in assignment preparation and to allocate each stage appropriate times and tasks in your semester, monthly and weekly schedules. Commonly these stages involve:

Preparation

- identifying what you already know
- determining what is required
- analysing the question

Research

- deciding what information you need
- locating relevant information sources
- gathering source material
- reading, digesting and recording the information

Organising your response

- grouping information and identifying key issues
- deciding what information to include
- creating a assignment plan

Writing drafts

- developing a first draft
- refining the draft
- editing the final draft

Polishing for presentation

- writing a reference list and checking citations for accuracy, completeness and correctness
- printing a final copy
- reward yourself !

For each main stage of the process ask yourself: How long will it take? When will I do it? Then incorporate these tasks into your study timetable.

Additional web resources

The following websites provide further information and have been used as a basis for the writing of this guide. You can google other sites by typing an appropriate search term, *but try to ensure they are reliable sites.*

Time scheduling

http://www.utexas.edu/student/utlc/learning_resources/

How to manage time and workload over a semester

<http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au/onlib/time.html>

Forms for conducting a time audit

http://www.d.umn.edu/student/loon/acad/strat/time_audit.html

Practice developing a schedule

<http://www.studygs.net/timman.htm>

Take a test to assess how well you plan

<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~acskills/success/time.html>