

Foster Care to Academic Success

Time Management

Time Management

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Part I Exercises

You need two pieces of information from your school in order to complete these exercises – and you should already have both of them handy.

1. Your class schedule for this semester
2. The syllabus from each of your classes

Exercise 1

Estimate how many hours you spend each day doing what are called your “activities of daily living” – sleeping, eating, studying, working, hanging out, etc.

Write these on the **Daily Hour Count** sheet.

Exercise 2

Write your class schedule, work schedule and any other *regularly scheduled events* (weight training, babysitting your friend’s daughter, etc.) on the **Daily Schedule Spring 2005** sheet. Choose three different colors; one for academics, one for work and one for personal events.

Exercise 3

Looking at your class syllabi, write the major events in each class (mid-term, paper or project due date, etc.) on the **Spring Semester Calendar**. Also write in any important dates – academic or personal – that you know are coming up. Examples would be spring break, the last day of classes, your boyfriend’s birthday or the date you are running the marathon. Again, choose one color of ink for academic events and another for personal events.

Exercise 4

Find out your **Procrastination Quotient**. Fill in this sheet to see if you are an occasional, chronic, or severe procrastinator.

* * * *

Having completed these four exercises you should have a pretty good idea of what is coming up this semester. Put the two calendars on your wall so that you will not forget important things – I’ve heard a silly rumor that some of you actually turn off your alarm and sleep through classes ... nah, I can’t believe it ...

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Daily Hour Count

How many hours a day do you spend on the following activities? Don't forget – there are only 24 hours in each day!

Classes	Personal care/grooming
Studying	Meal preparation/eating/clean-up
Sleeping	Travel to school, work, etc.
Exercise/sports	Relaxing/TV/video games, etc. (alone)
Work/internship	Socializing/entertainment (with friends)
Personal commitments	Other

This exercise should help you see if there is one area you are spending too much time on – or if there is an area you should spend MORE time on. On average, you should get seven to eight hours of sleep a night in order to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

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Daily Schedule Fall 2009

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Weekend
8:00-9:00						
9:00-10:00						
10:00-11:00						
11:00-noon						
1:00-2:00						
2:00-3:00						
3:00-4:00						
4:00-5:00						
5:00-6:00						
6:00-7:00						
7:00-8:00						
8:00-9:00						
9:00-10:00						

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PROCRASTINATION QUOTIENT

	Statement	Strongly Agree	Mildly Agree	Mildly Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	I usually find reasons for not acting immediately on a difficult assignment.				
2.	I know what I have to do but frequently find that I have done something else.				
3.	I carry my books/work assignments with me to various places but do not open them.				
4.	I work best at the "last minute" when the pressure is really on.				
5.	There are too many interruptions that interfere with my accomplishing my top priorities.				
6.	I avoid forthright answers when pressed for an unpleasant decision.				
7.	I take half measures which will avoid or delay unpleasant or difficult action.				
8.	I have been too tired, nervous or upset to do the difficult task that faces me.				
9.	I like to get my room in a good order before starting a difficult task.				
10.	I find myself waiting for inspirations before becoming involved on most important study/work tasks.				
	TOTAL RESPONSES				
	WEIGHT	x 4	x 3	x 2	x 1
	SCORE				

Multiply the TOTAL RESPONSE row by the corresponding WEIGHT to get the SCORE for each column. Add up the SCORE row to determine your total score. That number is your Procrastination Quotient.

Below 20 - Occasional; 21 - 30 - Chronic; Above 30 - Procrastinator

This rating system is by H. E. Florey of the University of Alabama Counseling Center

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Part II Now Let's Do It!

The steps to good scheduling are easy:

1. Make a semester-long calendar including all academic and personal events
2. Every Sunday (well, okay we'll let you pick the day yourself) write a calendar for the next week
3. Every evening, write a list of the things you need to do the next day

Having developed a calendar of your semester with every important event listed, you can work backwards to figure out “milestones” – when you need to start a project and how much you should have accomplished by each milestone leading up to the due date.

Once you have a calendar you will also be able to see at a glance when you have other responsibilities or personal events – your roommate's birthday or the Charity Ball, for example – and you can plan your studying around them.

With this long-term calendar on your wall, assign yourself a time to write out a weekly schedule. Sunday night might be a good time to sit for a few minutes and peacefully think about how things are going in your life. Give yourself a pat on the back because you did well the previous week or put the mistakes of the past behind you. Then write out a schedule of the most important things you have to do the next week. Because you have written the milestones towards projects and papers on your calendar, as well as tests, exams and personal events, you will be able to see at a glance what the week ahead looks like.

You think you're done and ready for action? No, there's one more step. Bring your scheduling down a notch and write out a list of everything you need to do the next day. This should include doing the laundry and cleaning out the medicine cabinet as well as reading 50 pages of your history text and finding four websites for your research project. Write it on your list, and the next day when you've done it – check it off! A man giving a seminar once asked his audience, “How many of you add something to your to-do list AFTER you have finished it just to give yourself the pleasure of checking it off?” A lot of people raised their hands – there is something intrinsically satisfying about checking off a job well done.

Every evening, look at your to-do list and write one out for the next day. Include what you didn't accomplish that day if it is still important, and think for a minute about why you didn't get it done. This will help you to prioritize your time better the next day.

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Part III Conquering Procrastination

Because this is an Academic Success Program, we will assume that you are procrastinating about school ... writing papers and studying for tests.

Here are some hints on avoiding procrastination using the calendars you produced in Part I.

First, any project feels less intimidating if you break it down into smaller segments. Look at your project and determine the steps you have to take to accomplish it. For example, to do a research paper you need to:

- Choose your topic
- Find your sources and start your bibliography
- Write your thesis statement and make your outline
- Do your research!
- Write the paper
- Polish it up, cite your sources and turn it in

Working backwards from the due date, estimate how long each step will take. You may want to consider your procrastination quotient – call it “creative leisure”. If you account for some procrastination in advance, your estimate will be more accurate. Working backwards from the day a project is due will tell you when to start, give you milestones to achieve and ensure that you have completed the project on time.

Having set out your timeline, here are some suggestions to keep you going:

- Organize your environment – clean up your study area.
- Establish a regular time to study.
- Concentrate on the small steps towards your bigger goal.
- Use your friends – set up a study group or agree to work with a friend as you both get the project done.
- Keep your reminders in front of you – post your calendar and keep your lists handy.
- Make priorities among tasks. It might be a good idea to do the things you enjoy the least first, while you are fresh and can get through them quickly, and save the things you like to do most for last.
- Similarly, make something you like to do contingent on finishing your assigned task first. Say that you have to read 30 pages of your text book before you can go to the coffee shop with your friends, or that you have to memorize five conjugations before you can watch a movie.

Finally, be kind to yourself. As long as you are making progress, know it takes time to change. Forgive yourself if you make mistakes or do not accomplish one of your goals right away, and be rightfully proud when you do something better than you thought you could.

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Part IV Strategies, Tips and Websites

Here are some final strategies for successful time management –

- Be proactive
 - Take responsibility for your own time. It is YOUR life and YOUR future that are at stake.
- Put first things first
 - Prioritize! Do the things you need to do FIRST. Get them out of the way before moving on to something else. Distinguish the truly important from the unnecessary or inconsequential.
- Keep the end in mind
 - Remember that each step on the way is towards the bigger goals of getting a good grade on that paper or test, getting a good grade in that class, and ultimately walking across that stage in front of your peers and the people who love you.

And some tips –

- Keep your semester calendar up to date, make a weekly calendar, and use LISTS!
- Break big projects into smaller segments to make them more manageable.
- Schedule fun time into your day and week – remember that your health (mental and physical) are the most important things of all.
- Maintain a neat study area and organize regular study times.
- Reward yourself when you do something well.

Finally, here are some excellent time management websites –

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

<http://www.lib.umn.edu/help/calculator/> - be SURE to check out this website. If you plug in the type of assignment you have, the due date and the current date, it will tell you all of the steps you need to get from beginning to end, and suggest a time line. This is a WONDERFUL resource!

This is YOUR life. Your college days should be some of the most exciting and best of your life. Managing your schedule so that you get your work done and have enough time for play will ensure that you enjoy these days to their fullest, and get the most possible out of them.