



Sara Effective Time Management SHEETS

Ever wonder how some people can fit so many activities into their schedules, while others barely have time to attend classes? Are they smarter? Doubtful. More organized? You're getting warmer. Better at managing their time? Bingo!!

Time management is self management. Although this handout will give you some pointers on how to manage your time, it is important to realize that only you know your peak work hours, your attention span, and your eating and sleeping needs. Time management is a highly personalized skill, and whatever method works for you is the right one.

THREE STEPS TO EFFECTIVE TIME MANAGEMENT ARE:

1. ORGANIZING

The more organized you are, the more effectively you will be able to use the 24 hours in each day. Ideally, each morning you should make a list of everything you want or need to get done that day. (If it works better for you, you can also do this at night before you go to bed.) Don't think about which tasks are most important at this point. Just write them all down. Once you get in the habit of doing this, you might want to organize yourself for a few days in advance to help plan longer projects.

2. PRIORITIZING

The next step is to prioritize the items on your list. Assign an "A" to those things that you **HAVE TO DO**; "B" to the tasks you **SHOULD DO**; and "C" to those items that can be **DEFERRED** until the next day. Keep in mind due dates for projects if they are for a class. You might consider how much of the final grade that particular project is worth (5% or 50%). This can help you decide how high a priority should be assigned to the project.

Don't procrastinate! Try not to leave projects for the last minute – that's the least effective way of getting things done. Sometimes late night cramming will be necessary, but try to keep it to a minimum.

3. SCHEDULING

Now that you have your prioritized list of everything you need and want to do, you should look at your schedule to fit your projects around the "givens" (class, work, sleep, etc.) in your day. Your schedule should be flexible. Leave room for breaks, socializing and those little things that tend to pop up. Allow for the unexpected! Don't try to plan out every minute of your day. As you are scheduling, keep your personal needs and habits in mind. For example, don't schedule study time in the morning if you like to sleep in late. Be realistic and make a schedule, which you can be sure to stick to.

Following the steps of Organizing, Prioritizing, and Scheduling will help you to use your time more effectively. One final hint: as you go through the day, ask yourself, "What is the best use of my time right now?"

CREATING “THINGS TO DO” LISTS

An effective way of integrating organizing, prioritizing, and scheduling into your life is by creating “Things To Do” lists. Here are some ideas to keep in mind when creating your lists.

- **MAKE YOUR TASKS “DO-ABLE.”** Make your list realistic. (Overestimating the amount of things you can accomplish can put you into greater time binds.)
- Estimate time realistically. Be sure to schedule enough time to get your tasks done. Also be sure to allow extra time in case you have problems; it’s better to give yourself too much time than to cut yourself short.
- **DON’T PUT TOO MANY “SHOULD” OR “OUGHT” ON YOUR LIST.** You need to maintain a healthy balance between the tasks you want to do, the tasks you feel you should do, and the tasks you have to do. If you focus too much of your time on the things you want to do, you’ll end up having less time to complete the tasks you have to do.
- **ESTABLISH A DAILY ROUTINE.** Determine for yourself what time of the day is best for doing certain activities and get in the habit of doing them at that time.
- **INTEGRATE LISTS.** Have your lists include all aspects of your life. Having separate lists for class work, organizations, social activities, and work can be confusing.
- **MAKE TIME FOR PEOPLE AND FUN.** Everyone needs some time to have fun or their productivity will suffer. After taking time off, people often feel revitalized and have more energy to get work done.
- **FEEL O.K. WHEN YOU’RE FINISHED.** Spending lots of time regretting failures or feeling frustrated often wastes even more time. Feel good for accomplishing what you have, and then move on.

REFERENCES

Finley, M. “Time Management for Leaders.” Student Organization and Development Center, University of Michigan.

Lakein, J. *How to Get Control of Your Time and Life*.

Paul, J. “Get Organized!”

For more information on organization and personal development skills in the SOAR series, stop by or call UNL Student Involvement, 200 Nebraska Union, 472-2454; or 300 Nebraska East Union, 472-1780. Staff members will be happy to assist you and answer your questions.

LEARN TO SAY “NO”

Remember there is not enough time each day to do everything for everybody. In order to keep from burning out, you need to take time for yourself and learn to say “no” to some of the requests for your time. Only you can realistically look at your commitments to see if you have the time to commit to other tasks. Say “no” when you don’t want to, can’t, or don’t have the time. If you over-commit yourself, everyone will come out behind. Openness and honesty are the keys to saying “no.” Your friends and co-workers will most likely understand your situation if you level with them.

HOW DO I FIND TIME IN MY SCHEDULE TO DO EVERYTHING I WANT?

Analyzing your current schedule is one of the keys to determining how and when you can get more things done. Make a time analysis grid. Carefully go through the chart and “X” all the times that are committed – work, club meetings, meals, classes, hobbies, etc. Don’t forget to put in those sleep hours for the mornings you sleep in and the relaxation times when you read, socialize or do “whatever.” After you have done all this, take a look at the time that’s still unused.

What are you doing during those times? Study this and try to put these hours to better use, whether it be for working, reading, or playing.

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