

How to manage your time efficiently?



The gist of Time Management is to help you **study smarter**, instead of harder. This means you can make more **efficient** use of your study time and complete your work in less time by using good time-management skills. In contrast with the structured and well-defined time schedule in high school, university life is characterized by **flexibility**. Spending time to plan ahead will actually save you time. You may be surprised to find that time becomes more **under your own control**, instead of controlling you.



Test Yourself

YES or NO



I underestimate the time for revision or completing assignments.



I rush through assignments only when the deadline is getting near.



I make lists of things to do in my head rather than on paper.



I spend a lot of time in one task but eventually fail to complete the others.

If you answer “yes” to the above statements, you are recommended to improve your time management skills.

How do you use your time?

Fill in your fixed commitments (i.e. things you need to do the same time everyday or every week.)

Sample:

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri
0800-0900	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast
0900-1000	Exercise	Lecture	Exercise		Library
1000-1100	Lecture	Lecture		Lecture	Library
1100-1200	Lecture			Lecture	
1200-1300	Lecture				
1300-1400	Lecture	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
1400-1500	Lunch		Lecture		
1500-1600			Lecture	Lecture	
1600-1700	Lecture		Lecture	Lecture	
1700-1800		Library		Lecture	Exercise
1800-1900	Exercise	Library			Dinner
1900-2000	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	
2000-2100		Practise dancing			
2100-2200		Practise dancing			
2200-2300	shower				
2300-2400					
2400-0100		Shower		Shower	Shower
0100-0200		Sleep	Shower	Sleep	Sleep
0200-0300	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep
0300-0400	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep
0400-0500	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep
0500-0600	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep
0600-0700	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep
0700-0800	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep

Calculate the number of hours left: _____

Try it! Download this calendar:

http://issuu.com/cedarscope/docs/fixed_commitment_calendar_download

Sleep, class, meal time, and routine activities are examples of fixed commitments. After you have written down all regular commitments, you would be able to see the amount of time available for your study or other tasks.

Do you allocate enough time for your study?

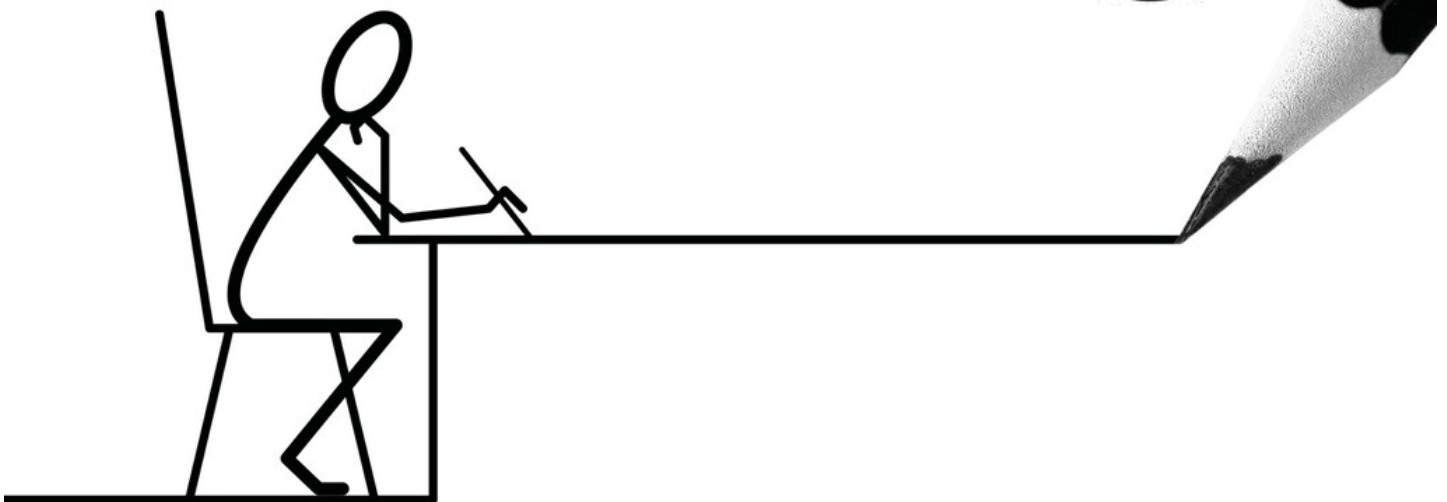
1. Consider your credit load

2 : 1 ratio

2 hours study time : 1 hour class

Calculate the number of study hours you need:

_____ x 2
(hour class)



Think twice before you “overload” credits because it means you need to work “over time”.

2. Remind yourself of the difficulty level of course(s) taken

A course can be tough for you but not others if you do not have background knowledge.

Reserve a **3 : 1** ratio

for renowned difficult class(es) or even a 4 : 1 ratio



3. Put your target grade into consideration

More study time
--> better grade



2 : 1 study to credit ratio represents the average time spent (which will yield an average grade, such as “C”)

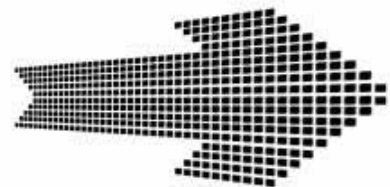


If you want to have better grade, more time should be devoted to review your notes, work on assignments, and prepare for class, etc.

**So it is
obvious
that you
don't have
much time
to waste...**



**Use your time
wisely**





Plan Ahead

Make good use of time planner





Keep a running list

List out all of the tasks that you need to complete over the next week or two, including personal tasks.

Organize them in your schedule so that you will see whether there are tasks competing with each other for your time.

Example:

November						
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
				Meeting		
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
			Part time job	Mid-term paper	Tennis competition	
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Hiking			Part time job	Seminar		
25	26	27	28	29	30	
	Meeting with hall tutor	Tutorial presentation	1. Part time job 2. Assignment		BBQ with friends	



When there are overlapping tasks, you need to reschedule your time.



Daily to-do list

Prioritize the things you need to do and check the tasks after completion.

Example:

	To do list:
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1. Complete lab report
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2. Meeting with tutor
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3. Go to the bookstore
<input type="checkbox"/>	4. Draft Essay
<input type="checkbox"/>	5. Project meeting (3:00pm, Starbucks)
<input type="checkbox"/>	6. Prepare for lectures
<input type="checkbox"/>	7. Organize course materials
<input type="checkbox"/>	8. Get laundry

More tips



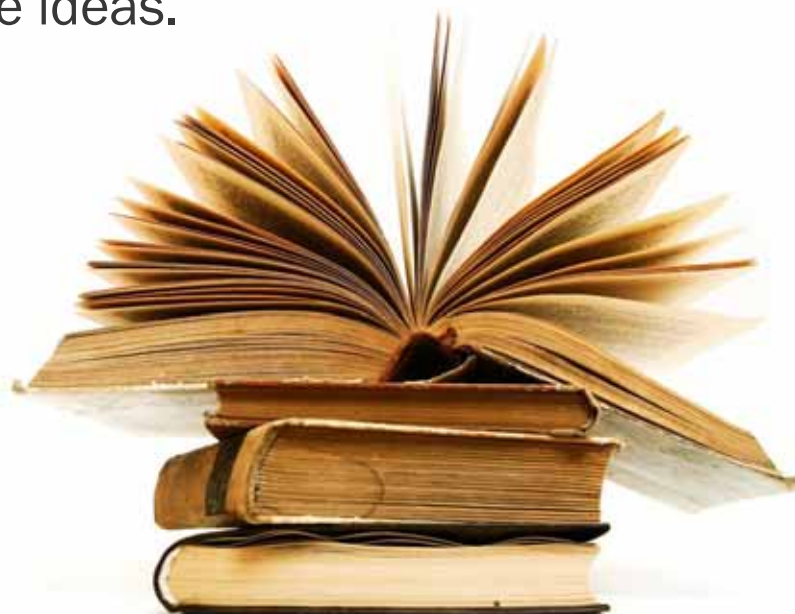
Study in a one-hour blocks

Break down your study tasks into 1-hour blocks, which include 50-minute studying/working time and a 10-minute break. If 1 hour is too long for you, you may try 25-minute + 5-minute break.



Take breaks

A 10-minute break after 50-minute study helps you to concentrate better and maintain your motivation. Be realistic about how you may use the 10 minutes. Stretching, email checking, or having some snacks are feasible ideas.





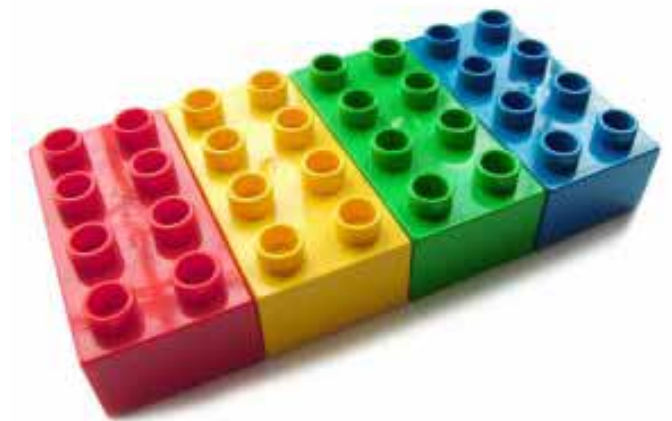
Tackle difficult assignments when you are alert

Do the difficult and least favourite task when you are most alert and motivated. This prevents you from staying away from difficult tasks.



Switch subjects

Another strategy for keeping up a good spirit is to switch subjects by alternating between two study tasks. Consider switching subjects especially when you have a long study block (e.g. 5 hours).



Break tasks down

When a task involves multiple steps and looks overwhelmingly difficult, break it down into manageable units. You will likely experience a sense of achievement after small chunks are completed.



Plan rewards

Rewards always helps us to feel motivated and satisfied about what we have achieved. Plan small rewards after you have accomplished a task.

Learning Consolidation

Which of the following sentences make more sense to you?

A. I should follow the 2:1 ratio for study versus class hours in whichever course or assignments.

B. Study time allocation can be adjusted according to factors like the difficulty level of the course and the target grade that you would like to achieve.

A. I must concentrate on my academic materials as long as possible, so as to prevent myself from getting off track.

B. Breaks can be inserted between each study hour to help you stay motivated.

A. I should follow the tips in this document as exactly as possible.

B. I can experiment these tips and see what suit me better.

Further information:

Study tips compiled by CEDARS - Counselling and Person Enrichment

<http://w3.cedars.hku.hk/counselling/content/enrichment.php>

FAQ Videos on Successful University Life

<http://wp.cedars.hku.hk/web/faqvideos/>



References:

Blerkom, D.L. (2009) *College Study Skills: Becoming a Strategic Learner* (6th ed.). Boston: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.

Santrock, J.W. & Halonen, J.S. (2010) *Your Guide to College Success: Strategies for Achieving Your Goals* (6th ed.). Boston: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.