

# Time Management Tips

Do you always seem to be running behind? Do you feel like you never have enough time to get everything done? Well, there's nothing we can do to add hours to our day, but we can adjust how we manage our time so we can make the best use of it.

## Identify Time Stealers

Take one whole day and track what you spend your time doing. Yes, it may be a pain to record everything, but it's only one day- and you'll be amazed at the things that take up your time. There are apps that can help you with this, such as RescueTime and Toggl. Knowing the things that steal your time will make you more aware so you can make changes to your habits and routine. For example, if you know you spend way too much time on social media, you'll be more likely to stop yourself when you begin to check your Twitter feed, etc. It's even better when you can make real concrete changes based on that awareness. Instead of just being aware that you need to check social media less, commit to only looking at it during a specific time of your day- maybe for 15 minutes at lunch.

## The Best Time Management Tools

The best time management advice is simple: use a to-do list and a calendar/planner. These two tools can help you make the best use of your day, especially when you use them together.

Keep a to-do list, or a running list of things that you have to get done. It's a good idea to prioritize them so you complete the most important tasks first. You can use a simple system to prioritize, like A, B, and C. A is the most important and urgent. B is important, but not as urgent. C is anything that is not A or B- those things that can be put off a bit. Use your calendar/planner to schedule time to complete your to-do tasks. As you complete something, mark it off your to-do list. As new tasks arise, add them to the list. The to-do list is a living document that is always in the process of being updated.

Use the calendar/planner to schedule your days. Start with the commitments that are recurring- those things that you have to do over and over- daily or weekly or monthly. One example would be your college classes. Put these repetitive items on the calendar first. Then include other appointments that are not recurring, such as a doctor's appointment. Then,

use the leftover time to pencil in those things that are on the to-do list. If you schedule your to-do items, you are more likely to get them done and get them done on time.

Many people still use pencil and paper to create their to-do lists and use a printed planner or calendar for scheduling. However, for those who prefer electronic options, there are apps that also do these things. Here are a few of them.

- **To-Do List Apps:**
  - Any.do
  - Remember the Milk
  - Wunderlist
  - Trello
- **Calendar/Planner Apps:**
  - RescueTime
  - Toggl
  - Freedom

## **Useful Tips**

- If you are overwhelmed with everything you need to do, try to start with something small and quick to complete. It will give you a sense of accomplishment and encouragement as you move on to tackle bigger and more complex tasks.
- Establish a routine. As much as possible, try to have a set time to do the things you have to do. For example, try to pick the same time each day for studying. When you get into a habit or routine, it is much easier to stick with it and get things done.
- Being organized is key to saving time. When you have to waste time searching for things, it is counter-productive.
  - Organize your class materials by putting all notes, handouts, graded homework, etc. for each class in a 3-ring binder. Have a separate binder for each class.
  - Organize your book bag so you can easily find everything. Clean it out daily so you aren't hunting through candy bar wrappers and old receipts to find your supplies.
  - Keep everything in the same place all the time. When you establish a set place for everything it saves you time and reduces frustration.

- **Don't forget to take some breaks and use them wisely. Then, use your breaks to accomplish other small tasks or errands. For example, take a short break from studying and use that time to return a book to the library.**
- **Learn to say no. Just because something is presented to you doesn't mean you have to do it. Even things that are appealing or appear to be useful can turn into time stealers if you have more important/urgent things to get done. Use your calendar/planner to determine if you have time before you commit to do something.**
- **If social media is a big distraction for you, try finding an app that blocks social media or set your phone so that social media notifications aren't enabled.**

