



CHAPTER 1: TIME MANAGEMENT 101

Many online students have very full lives, including work, family, home, personal responsibilities, and community responsibilities. Finding the time to accomplish all of this can be overwhelming.

Time management begins with assessing what must be accomplished and the time available to complete each task. Effective time management includes the following seven success steps:

1. **Assess the amount of time each task requires.** How many hours does it take to clean the house? To study for a test? To run errands? Record these times.
2. **Analyze how you're spending your time.** Out of the hours you recorded for housecleaning, how much is spent talking on the phone? Does e-mail interrupt studying? Do you stop by a friend's house while running errands? You'll want to see where you might find extra time.
3. **Determine your most productive times of day.** Everyone has a time of day when they can be most productive. That is your peak productivity time. Use that time to complete the most important tasks. Routine tasks should be accomplished during lower-energy periods.
4. **Prioritize your tasks.** Know which of your tasks are more important than others and understand your responsibilities. Plan to accomplish these tasks first.
5. **Make a daily schedule.** Use the calendar or to-do list on your computer or cell phone to record a schedule for the day. Periodically check your progress and adjust the schedule as needed. Identify specific times for phone calls, meetings, and other duties. If a task is not completed, move it to your list for the following day.

6. **Establish a weekly game plan.** Determine projects and goals on a weekly basis, and then break them down into daily tasks. This will indicate your overall progress and let you see what's ahead.
7. **Don't procrastinate unenjoyable tasks.** Get them done in a timely manner and reward yourself for the accomplishment.

Resources

A variety of tools are available for time and life management that are compatible with your online education. Electronic planning systems including calendars, memos, and reminders are available with your computer's operating system, word-processing software, or cell phone. Here are a few Web sites to help you get (and stay) organized:

43 Things is a social networking site where users create accounts and then share lists of goals and hopes. Think of this as a way to share and garner support for your long-term goals.

<http://www.43things.com>

Remember The Milk provides an intuitive interface to show you what's due today and tomorrow, as well as what's overdue. With any Web-enabled mobile device, you can access maps to where your tasks are located and get reminders via e-mail or text message.

<http://www.rememberthemilk.com>

Toodledo is an easy to use, Web-based to-do list to help you get organized, stay motivated, and be more productive.

<http://www.toodledo.com>

Ta-da List lets you make to-do lists available on any Web browser and certain cell phones for true portability without the pad and pen.

<http://www.tadalist.com>