

Lesson 3

Time Management



Key Words

procrastination
time management
time wasters

What You Will Learn to Do

- Develop a personal time management plan

Linked Core Abilities

- Take responsibility for your actions and choices
- Apply critical thinking techniques

Skills and Knowledge You Will Gain Along the Way

- Distinguish between time efficiencies and time wasters
- Relate time management to your personal goals
- Develop daily, weekly, monthly, and quarterly/semester time management plans
- Define the key words contained in this lesson

Introduction

Think back to this morning. How was it for you? Did you get up on time? Did you have breakfast? Did you have time to do what you expected to do or what your parents expected you to do? Now, think back to last evening. Did you finish your homework? Did you take care of your share of the household chores? Did you watch your favorite television program?

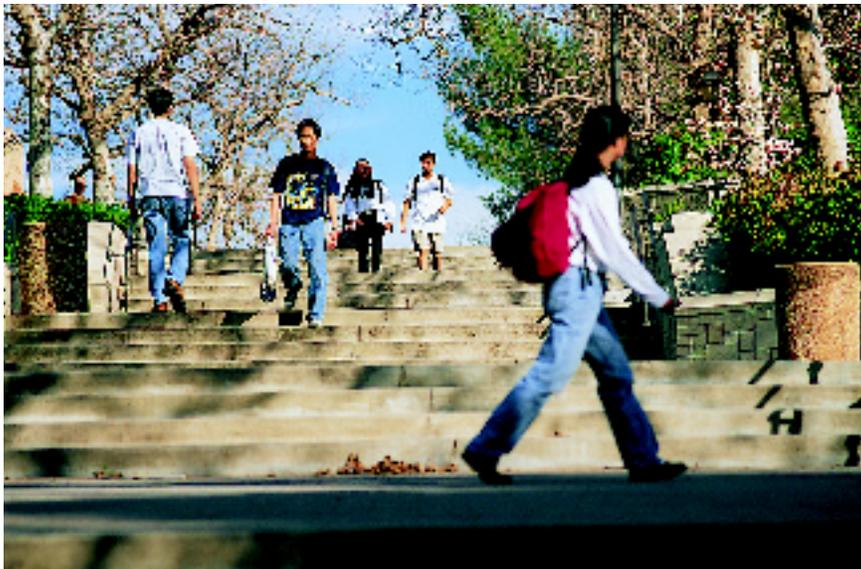
Frustration creeps in when you do not manage time well. On a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being poor use of time and 10 being good use of time), how well did you manage your time yesterday? If you can honestly answer 9 or 10, give yourself an A. If you answered 7 or below, you need to organize your day better in order to gain control of your time and your life. Setting priorities and planning your time effectively can eliminate stressful situations in your life (see Figure 10.3.1).

Every day you are given a precious gift—the gift of time. You get 24 hours, but how you choose to use this time makes all the difference. When you take responsibility for your time—by planning your day and building a schedule to achieve your goals—you are practicing **time management**.

This section teaches you how to plan your day and how to execute your plan. Planning your day will help you target academic and personal goals, manage the increasing demands on your time, reduce stress, increase successes, and achieve greater satisfaction and enjoyment of life.

The Perfect Day

You can divide the day into five blocks of time: before school, during school, after school, before bed, and bedtime.



Key Note Term

time management – the process of effectively using time to gain control of events, conditions, and actions

Figure 10.3.1: Learning to set priorities and plan your time effectively can eliminate stressful situations like running class too late.

Courtesy of Deborah Davis/
Tony Stone Images.

Before School

Consider the morning as that part of the day from the time you wake up until the time you leave for school. What is a perfect morning?

- **What time would you get up?**
- **How long would you need to take care of your personal hygiene, grooming, and dressing?**
- **How much time would you need to take care of your other responsibilities, such as helping to get your younger sister or brother ready, feeding the pets, or taking out the trash?**
- **What other activities must you complete before school and how long do they take?**

Before Bed

Back up for a moment. To have a perfect morning, you must definitely get some things accomplished in the evening, after dinner, and before you go to bed on the preceding day.

- **How much time should you spend doing homework and chores?**
- **How much time is left for talking on the phone or watching television?**
- **What is your nighttime ritual before going to bed? Do you choose your clothes for the next day, pack your book bag, or prepare your lunch? How long does all that take?**
- **What time do you need to go to bed to get your “forty winks” of sleep? For most of us, eight hours of sleep is almost essential.**
- **What else do you need to do after dinner and before bed? Planning a perfect evening sets the stage for a perfect tomorrow.**

After School

Take a moment and back up some more. Consider what goes on after school. Do you participate in a club, in a sport, or in the band? Do you work after school?

Is there time before, during, or after practice or work to accomplish something meaningful? If you do not practice or work everyday, what would be the best use of your time after school and before dinner? This period can amount to between two to four hours, and it should include meaningful activities as well as leisure time and time to rest.

The time in your life that is within your control is the time before school, after school, and before bed if you take the school day and your sleeping time out of the equation.

Creating a Daily Activity Matrix

Before you can begin to manage your time effectively, you need to know how you currently spend your time. Completing a daily activity matrix, shown in Figure 10.3.2, can help you in this endeavor.

Activity	Minutes a Day	Days a Week
School		
School related extracurricular activities		
Playing sports (not school related)		
Homework and studying		
Watching TV		
Playing videogames		
Reading for pleasure		
Shopping		
Work		
Chores and family responsibilities		
Spending time with friends		
Spending time with family		
Church and all related activities		
Eating		
Sleeping		
Other		

Figure 10.3.2: Daily activity matrix.

Courtesy of CACI and the U.S. Army.

Examine the matrix. If you take the total time spent on these activities and subtract that from 1,440 (the number of minutes in a day), you end up with the number of minutes you spend in unscheduled activities. Is some of this time wasted? Remember that time wasted can never be regained. There are many ways that people waste time each day. Some of the most common **time wasters** are:

- **Procrastination.** This is putting something off that needs to be done. For example, you procrastinate writing the essays for your college application because it is burdensome.
- **Poor organization.** If you spend every morning looking for your backpack before you catch the bus to school, you are poorly organized, and you are wasting time.
- **Crisis management.** Do you spend a lot of time solving large and immediate problems? For example, you forgot you had a math quiz today, so now you have to drop everything else and cram for your quiz. This is a time waster because if you had planned better, you would not have had a crisis in the first place.

Could your time be better spent elsewhere?

Now that you have thought about it, you are ready to organize your day on paper. You should always write down your plans, keeping in mind that if you fail to plan, you plan to fail.

Tools for Time Management

There are three simple tools that students can use to ensure their time management effectiveness. These tools, a monthly calendar, a daily schedule/plan, and a “to-do” list, when used together on a daily basis, will ensure a more efficient and more effective time manager.

Key Note Terms

time wasters – activities that do not promote the effective use of time

procrastination – the act of putting off something that needs to be done

A Monthly Calendar

The monthly calendar is an important planning document. All appointments, class schedules, work schedules, meetings, sporting events, and other activities or events need to be entered or recorded on the monthly calendar first. Using a monthly calendar properly will provide you with a week at-a-glance and a month at-a-glance planning document. You can see all activities or events for any week or a particular month. Why do you need such a tool? Used properly, you will be better able to schedule activities and events without double scheduling or scheduling events on top of each other, which can be very embarrassing and time consuming.

The monthly calendar should never be used as a “to-do” list. Having class schedules, meetings, and so on on the same document is very confusing and can cause a lack of control as well as add unnecessary stress to your day. Most monthly calendars have a place for additional notes. This section is a good place to list events or activities that will take place in a certain month but not necessarily on any particular day. This note section is a good place to record reminders. For example, a friend or relative in another state may ask you to call them in March. To avoid losing that information, where would you record it? You can record it under the note section on the month of March. Figure 10.3.3 is an example of a monthly calendar. Monthly calendars are available in any office supply store or discount store as well as many businesses that give them out during December and January each year.

Daily Planning and Goals

Think about what you want to accomplish in school this year, and what part of it is achievable within the next six weeks. Do you want to

- **Make the honor roll?**

Figure 10.3.3: Monthly calendar or schedule which is used for weekly and monthly planning.
Courtesy of Prentice Hall.

MONTHLY SCHEDULE

Schedule & Events March 2004

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed
	1	2	3
7	8 8– Eng 9– Math 3– Work	9	10 8– Eng 9– Math 3– Work
14	15 8– Eng 9– Math 3– Work	16 8 ↓ Work 5	17 8– Eng 9– Math 3– Work
21	22 8– Eng 9– Math 3– Work	23 8 ↓ Work 5	24 8– Eng 9– Math 3– Work
28 Review March's budget and develop April's budget	29 8– Eng 9– Math 3– Work	30 8 ↓ Work 5	

Time Planner (What will I do this month to move me closer to the accomplishment of my goals?)

Quote or note of interest for the week:
Call Aunt Laura in early March.

www.campuscruiser.com/prenhall www.prenhall.com/success

Thu	Fri	Sat	Special Events
4	5	6	
11	12	13	
18 8 ↓ Work 5	19 8– Eng 9– Math 3– Work	20	
25 8 ↓ Work 5	26 8– Eng 9– Math 3– Work	27	

Time Planner (What will I do this month to move me closer to the accomplishment of my goals?)

Quote or note of interest for the week:

Figure 10.3.5: A one page daily schedule that includes a daily schedule of events on the left side of the page and a to-do list on the right side of the page.

Courtesy of CACI and the U.S. Army.

DAILY SCHEDULE					
www.campuscruiser.com/prenhall			www.prenhall.com/success		
Schedule & Events		Date 3 / 12 / 2004		Day Friday	
Time	Activity	Notes	To Do List	Check Off	Task or Activity
6:00 AM			A1		Study for English test
7:00			A2		Cash check
8:00	English		B2		Call Dr. Black for appt.
9:00	Math		A3		E-mail report to Bob
10:00	Study		B1		Call auto shop
11:00	Study		A4		Outline speech
12:00 PM	Lunch		B3		Call Deb about fishing
1:00	Study		A5		Call John Smith
2:00	Study		A6		Call Jane Jones
3:00	Work				
4:00					
5:00					
6:00					
7:00					
8:00					
9:00					

Assignments Due / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Completed / <input type="checkbox"/> Moved forward		
Check Off	Assignments	Due Date
	Report from John Smith (Refer to English Presentation file)	
	Report from Jane Jones	

The Big Picture

Planning one day at a time is like admiring a beautiful forest, one tree at a time. If the forest is your life, you may need to get an overview to see where the paths through the forest are leading. In the same way, you should plan in larger time frames to ensure your days are leading you toward your goals. The daily plan takes you through 24 hours of life and keeps you active in the here and now. The weekly plan shows you how to balance your life. You will discover that 168 hours is enough time to work, practice, study, attend meetings, spend time with your family, and have fun with your friends, too.

The quarter or semester plans show you the big picture far in advance. You can plan your days and weeks better if you have developed a quarter or semester schedule. The monthly calendar is an excellent tool to use to plan each semester. A school semester lasts approximately five months; the monthly calendar (see Figure 10.3.3) will help you visualize your plan. Monthly calendars display week by week when all of your tests, projects, mentoring activities, papers, science or math fairs, key social events, athletic or JROTC events, field trips, national test dates, family vacations, and so on are due or will occur. You will be able to determine which weeks are heavily scheduled. You can use the light weeks to start studying and preparing for the heavier weeks.

Plan Your Work, Work Your Plan

The following tips will help you to more effectively know how to plan your work for a day, week, or longer (quarter or semester) and enable you to do better at working your planning process.

- Make time every evening to review your day and plan your tomorrow.
- Reevaluate your goals every week and write short-term goals on your planning sheets. Stay committed to your goals.
- Prioritize your “to do” list.
- Make a list of things you can accomplish in 15- and 30-minute blocks of time. For example, dusting or emptying the trash, reviewing class notes, learning new Spanish vocabulary (already written on index cards), reviewing mentoring activities, or learning how to work one new math problem. Be ready to fill the in-between times with something useful.
- Use a timer to move you along during tight periods, such as mornings before school.
- Schedule something fun every day. Do your work first and reward yourself with something fun.
- Record your favorite television programs and watch them during planned leisure times.
- Be flexible; shift things around when necessary. Do not get discouraged if you are thrown off schedule by unavoidable circumstances.
- As you finish a task, cross it off your “to-do” list. Add anything you did that was not on the list and then cross it off. Adding and crossing tasks off your list is not only a way of keeping track of what you have accomplished but also a way of acknowledging your accomplishment.
- Enjoy the sense of satisfaction that comes from accomplishing something, no matter how small, and taking definite steps toward your goals.

Conclusion

Few people ever plan to fail, but many people fail to plan. Time is the great equalizer; everyone gets the same amount every day. Whether it is used or abused often determines who rises to greatness and who falls to failure. Daily, weekly, monthly, and long-term (quarter or semester) planning puts you in charge of your life.

Setting specific goals will give you a track to run on and a course to follow. You will know what it is you want, and you will go for it!

The cadet who routinely plans, reviews the plan, and adjusts it to the ups and downs of life will find this planning process very rewarding. Planning can help you to manage life's increasing demands while targeting academic and personal goals. Daily triumphs, no matter how small, will translate into goal achievements, generating greater satisfaction and enjoyment of life.

Now that you're familiar with how to plan your time more efficiently, you will most likely have more time to attend social functions. The following lesson covers the cadet etiquette guide. You will learn the best ways of interacting at social events and will gain the self-confidence to always present yourself in the best light possible.

Lesson Review

1. What is your favorite time of the day? Why?
2. How can planning your day give you more free time?
3. List three items you'd put in your daily schedule.
4. Define the term *procrastination*.