

Four Steps to Improve Time Management

Here are four strategies that can be very useful for managing time more effectively:

1. Create a semester schedule.
2. Assess and plan your work load each week.
3. Adjust your plan each day.
4. Evaluate your schedule.



Email and Instant Message in Moderation

Are you spending more than an hour per day composing email or sending instant messages? Is this necessary? You might feel as though you are multi-tasking when you message someone while reading or doing problems, but often the reverse is true. You are gradually becoming drawn into a conversation so slowly that you are aware of the time you are spending, until hours have passed. An assignment done while instant messaging or in between emails will likely take 2-3 times longer and not turn out well.

Limit yourself to one hour of email/message time per day, a half hour in the evening. When it is your time to send messages, have an agenda in mind for your replies, avoid tangents and stop when the half hour has passed. Be clear and succinct in your writing, and you will find you can convey much in a short space and time — and still get your work done.

Need Some Assistance

ISU Student Counseling Center offers individual consultations on time management. Call ISU Student Counseling Center at (812) 237-3939 to schedule an appointment. Most time management consultations only meet for 3 sessions.

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ISU Student Counseling Center

Wellness Tips



Time Management and Organization

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Simple Ways to Save Time

The Alarm Clock is Your Friend

Don't ignore your friend! Your alarm clock is one of the few time management tools that will actually pester you to stay on schedule. If you can't rise to the alarm, then chances are you will have a hard time following the rest of your schedule.

Make Waiting Productive

You will literally spend years of your life waiting in lines, for appointments and meetings, to catch the bus, and time between classes. The list is endless and the time adds up. Find simple ways to make this time productive.

- Keep note cards handy for review
- Touch up your lecture notes
- Continue with a reading assignment
- Work out a homework problem set

Remember that most tasks aren't done completely in one sitting. Make incremental progress whenever possible.

Break Bog or Difficult Tasks Into Smaller Ones

Getting started on a challenging problem set, a large research project or preparing for finals can be difficult because the task at hand is overwhelming. Break it down into smaller steps and set a schedule to complete each step.

Keep a Daily To-Do List

Prioritize tasks and carry over those that you did not complete to the next day. Your goal is not to do everything in one day, but to prioritize and do everything in a timely fashion. A to-Do list is a simple tool, but it will save you time.

OHIO: Only Handle It Once

When you sort through your mail, do you tend to look at everything once, and then leave it all in a pile, perhaps opening one or two things of interest? Then when you need to pay bills, you have to look at everything a second time in order to pull out your statements. Later, you may go through the same pile a third time to find a program flyer or the *one* credit card offer in which you might be interested? What a hassle! Only handle things once. When you sort your mail, sort bills, items to file/keep, items to pursue (put them on your to-do list) and recycle. You can likewise triage your email and telephone messages

Organize Your Space

Even a brilliant time management plan will run aground if you find yourself constantly looking for misplaced textbooks, lecture notes, car keys, meal card or student ID. This is not to say that your room must be ruthlessly spotless, but there is a certain degree of freedom in knowing where important things are without having to look. By keeping your space organized in a way that makes sense to you, you can free yourself from interruptions in creativity and those annoying last-minute searches that make you late.

Consume Information Selectivity

You are constantly bombarded with information: from the Internet, television, radio, magazine, newspapers— you name it. Some of it is not worthwhile, but even putting that quantity aside; there remains a vast sea of news, events, entertainment and learning of interest to you. When you are taking in a program, having a conversation or studying, ask yourself if you need this information. Will it be useful to you later?

Stop Others From Stealing Your Time

Who interrupts your work? Well-meaning friends and family can sometimes be a constant distraction. Pick a quiet, comfortable study location where you are not likely to be disturbed, and tell only those friends who can preserve your space where you will be. If this doesn't work, you might have to be more direct. Most people will understand about your need to concentrate on your work.

Use Technology to Make Life Easier

Nothing should make an MIT student happier than this suggestion. Electronic planners are often more efficient than paper planners because one schedule is usually integrated in many views. With one click you can see your daily plan, as well as your weekly and Monthly plans. Consider getting direct deposit for your paycheck and online banking for paying bills. Medical prescriptions can be filled through online pharmacies and shopping is easy over the Internet. Go out and enjoy all that Terre Haute has to offer, but when time is short and your daytime hours are limited, keep in mind that these are some easy ways to run an errand.