

Why Make a Schedule?

And Some Pointers

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Your body and your mind function best if you follow a schedule that is relatively consistent and regular. Getting dramatically different amounts of sleep from night to night and waking up at very different times is confusing for your system. Students who follow a regular and predictable schedule of sleep, study, meal-times, and exercise report a better quality of life and are, in general, more successful throughout their college careers.

Planning Sets You Free*

Some people may see scheduling their time as constricting, when in reality it provides a sense of freedom. Knowing what you have to do and when you will accomplish it, allows you to know that you will be able to get everything done. You can now enjoy your down time without feeling guilty!

Principles and Pointers

- **You know yourself** – plan difficult tasks when you are most alert and productive
- Experienced planners report success in **completing difficult tasks first**.
- **Use daylight hours** – research shows that each hour used during that day is equal to 1.5 hours at night.
- **Use time before and after class** to review class material.
 - Reviewing material before class, from the previous class and assigned readings, will help learning to be more active and retention to be more efficient because you are creating a framework for the new material to be related to.
 - Reviewing material immediately after class helps to reinforce the material in your mind. This, along with frequent reviews of the material will help make studying easier.
 - Small blocks of time here and there can really add up. Time between classes is a great time for a quick review, updating a weekly schedule, or reading a few pages of an assignment.
- **Avoid too much detail** – over planning can waste time and is unnecessary. Schedules are a guide, not a detailed action plan.
- **Know your sleep patterns.**
 - Determine how much sleep you need and try to get that much sleep every night, preferably at the same hours every night.
- **Maintain a healthy lifestyle.**
 - Monitor your **diet**. Make sure you include time for meals in your schedule. And remember that a healthy diet helps to keep you feeling your best, so you can accomplish everything on your to do list!
 - Schedule time for **physical exercise**. This doesn't necessarily mean time at the gym, but physical activity is as important as a healthy diet to keep you feeling your best.
- **Plan Ahead**
 - Look ahead at long-term assignments. Break them down into manageable pieces of work, and assign a personal deadline for each of those pieces.
 - Set a due date earlier than the assigned due date. This can help if you always seem to finish projects or papers at the last minute and never seem to have time for editing.
 - Don't wait for inspiration to come to you. Start your assignment and trust that inspiration will arise during the process.
- Maintain **flexibility and balance** in your schedule
 - Flexibility is a key component to scheduling. You must be willing to adjust your schedule as unexpected situations arise. It may seem frustrating at first, but if you remain committed to scheduling, you will soon see the many benefits of planning.

* Paraphrased from *Becoming a Master Student*, by Dave Ellis