



Time Management and Organizational Skills for Students

Students (and adults!) often end up trying to play catch up with the weekly to-do list. Here are a few tips to help you learn to manage your time, stay organized, and get everything done on time.

1. Be organized.

- Begin each day with a short **to-do list**. Each day create a new list, making sure to include those things that didn't get completed the day before.
- **Prioritize** your list, and focus first on the things that need to be done today, or ones that can be done quickly and crossed off the list.
- Use a **calendar or planner** to keep track of long-term assignment deadlines, vacation dates, social or work commitments.
- Have an **organized workspace** (and organized computer files) so you never have to hunt for your textbook, your research notes, graph paper, etc.

2. Alternate between focused study and breaks.

- **Set a timer** for one hour of distraction-free, focused study time. Turn off the cell phone, log out of chat windows, and ignore incoming email.
- **Take a ten-minute break** each hour. Stretch, get a snack, check your phone, or just relax. Set a timer for your break, too, and when it rings, begin another distraction-free, focused hour of study.
- **Eliminate time wasters throughout the day.** Figure out what takes time away your work (phone calls? Social media? Conversations? Fiddling with playlists?) and reclaim that time for productive work.
- When you get stuck, **do something physical refresh your brain.** Take a walk. Do jumping jacks or push-ups. Run. Bike. Put on some music and dance. Get your blood pumping. It's good for the brain.
- Keep your breaks short so you **don't lose your momentum.** Keep your daily goals in mind (remember your to-do list?). Enjoy your break fully, and then set the time again and get back to work.

3. Tackle large projects one step at a time.

- Divide large, time-consuming projects into smaller tasks. Work on one task at a time.
- For difficult or dreaded tasks, use the 10-minute rule: Work on it for ten minutes at a time (use a timer!), take a break or work on something else, and then do another ten minutes.
- Take the time to do a quality job. Correcting mistakes on sloppy work will cost you more time in the long run.
- Don't waste time fussing about unimportant details. Nothing is ever perfect. Just do your best, and then move on.

5. Eat well, sleep well, and exercise regularly.

- A healthy lifestyle will improve your focus, concentration, and productivity. And you'll just plain feel better.