Academic Wellbeing presents. . .

Time Management Strategies

The Importance of Time

Time Management involves the ability to prioritize tasks and responsibilities in order to use time effectively. Oftentimes, good time management allows students to increase their productivity, work towards goal completion, and decrease feelings of stress.

The way you spend your time each day impacts future events and responsibilities. Because of this, establishing a consistent daily or weekly routine allows you to better manage your time and promotes mental and physical wellness.

The word cloud clock above displays some student generated strategies for good time management. These strategies include: creating a schedule, establishing a consistent sleep routine, learning to say "no", starting assignments early, practicing school-life balance, and asking for help promptly. While not an exhaustive list, these strategies can hopefully give you a starting point for managing your time effectively.

Be careful of falling into distracting habits! These habits may negatively impact you and encourage poor time management.The following sections outline strategies for limiting distractions and overcoming poor time management habits.

Know How You Spend Your Time

In order to manage your time effectively, it is important to first identify how you are spending your time. Utilizing time management assessments and engaging in self-reflection are common ways to determine what daily commitments are the time consuming

Where is most of my time spent? What tasks are the hardest for me to get done? When am I typically most productive? How long do I usually take to complete this particular assignment?

To get a better understanding of how you spend your time, consider completing the Time Assessment found on the resources section of our website. In addition, map out your hourly commitments on the Weekly Schedule To-Do List.

Additionally, scheduling a free time management consultation (through the Tutorzone) may be helpful too. To schedule your time management consultation, please click HERE, and enter "time management" in the course search bar.

Set Priorities and Understand Urgency

To be the most effective in our time management, we must understand the difference between importance and urgency. Urgent tasks should be the highest priorities on your to do list because it can be problematic if they aren't accomplished. Important tasks should be completed after all the urgent tasks but before medium and low priority commitments.
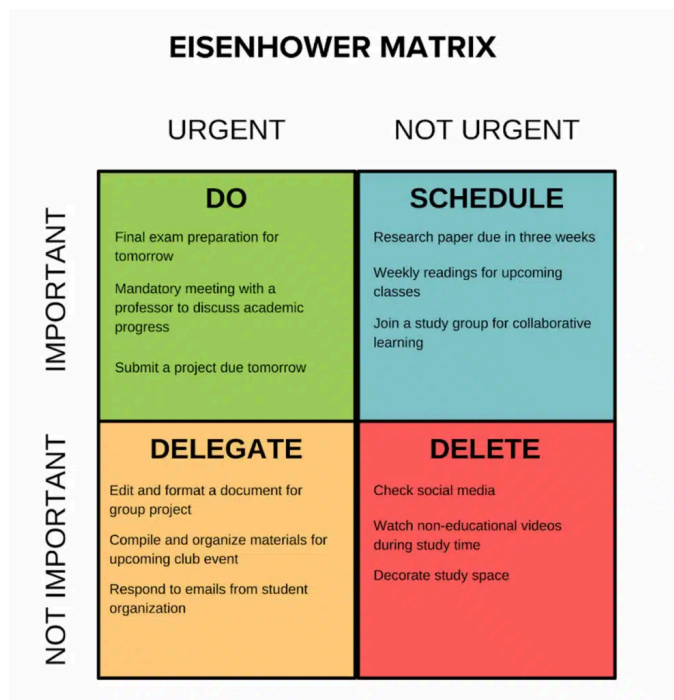
Pro Tip: Create a to-do list or chart with tasks to complete and indicate their priority. If it helps, highlight items of higher priority and cross off tasks from the list once you've completed them.

The Eisenhower Matrix for Task Prioritization

The Eisenhower Matrix is a framework for helping students "distinguish between tasks that demand immediate attention and those that align with broader objectives. By systematically organizing responsibilities, the matrix empowers learners to optimize their time and concentrate efforts on activities that contribute significantly to both personal and academic success" (Holt, 2023, para 7).

To use the framework, students separate tasks and responsibilities into four quadrants based on level of urgency.

- **Quadrant 1** - urgent tasks that must be done first (**DO**)
- **Quadrant 2** - important tasks that can be scheduled and completed at another time (**SCHEDULE**)
- **Quadrant 3** - tasks that are urgent but, when and if possible, can be given to someone else to do (**DELEGATE**)
- **Quadrant 4** - tasks that are not important and not urgent; these tasks may also be distractions and prohibit productivity (**DELETE**)

EISENHOWER MATRIX

	URGENT	NOT URGENT
IMPORTANT	**DO** Final exam preparation for tomorrow Mandatory meeting with a professor to discuss academic progress Submit a project due tomorrow	**SCHEDULE** Research paper due in three weeks Weekly readings for upcoming classes Join a study group for collaborative learning
NOT IMPORTANT	**DELEGATE** Edit and format a document for group project Compile and organize materials for upcoming club event Respond to emails from student organization	**DELETE** Check social media Watch non-educational videos during study time Decorate study space

For more information about the Eisenhower Matrix, please click HERE. Want a template? Scroll to the bottom of this document!

Use a Planning Tool

A key aspect of time management is organization. Consider using a planning tool such as a planner, google calendar, or time management app to organize your responsibilities.

Commonly Used Organizational Apps

The College of William & Mary does not directly sponsor any of these apps; however, these apps have been found to be very helpful by many students who use them.

1. Evernote allows students to track ongoing to-do lists, make notes, and view their daily responsibilities in one platform. It also helps students plan ahead by allowing them to store information, articles, and images in one place that they can easily access later on when needed.

For more information about **Evernote**, please click HERE.

2. Google Calendar is a quick and easy way to organize and access your commitments and responsibilities. Whether on your computer, tablet, or cellphone, Google Calendar allows students to monitor their day-to-day tasks. Additionally, Google Calendar allows students to color code and categorize tasks in a way that makes the most sense to them.

For more information about Google Calendar, please click HERE.

3. Google Keep is designed to help students take notes and make to-do lists. In addition to written notes, Google Keep allows students to record and keep track of audio files or thoughts they'd like to remember.

For more information about Google Keep, please click HERE.

4. MyHomework Student acts as an electronic planner for students. Using this app allows students to organize homework, assignments, and exams, and receive

reminders as things become due. In addition, the calendar feature allows students to see what parts of their semester they may be busier than others.

For more information about **MyHomework Student Planner**, please click HERE.

5. SimpleMind+ is an app that allows students to map out assignments and connections. This app is very similar to the Concept Mapping study technique often hand written by students on white boards or sheets of paper.

For more information about **SimpleMind+,** please click HERE.

6. Trello is an organization app that allows students to track and manage project and assignment completion. This platform is also interactive and can be used to create a hub for classmates to create a board for them to monitor tasks together. The timeline function allows a student to see their progress as they strive to reach their goals for different tasks and assignments.

For more information about **Trello**, please click HERE.

Planners

Planners are a useful tool for students who like a physical avenue for organizing their schedule and assignments.

Alternatively, consider using the Semester Planning Guide. This resource breaks the semester up by weeks so students can divide their assignments into manageable parts to complete one at a time.

Want a generic planner? Stop by our office, "the Sweetest Suite", Sadler 184, to pick one up.

Schedule Commitments and Tasks Appropriately

Plan your most challenging tasks for when you have the most energy. If a particular task requires more time to complete than you originally allotted, designate a specific time to return to work on it.

Using Timers

Intentionally setting time limits for assignment completion can both increase productivity and decrease fatigue. Whether you set an alarm or time to go off after an allotted amount of time or at a certain time of day, breaking down your assignments often makes them easier to complete.

Pro Tip: Incorporate 10-15 minute brain breaks into your schedule. Taking these short breaks will increase productivity and prevent burnout.

Avoid Multitasking and Reduce Distractions

Although it may seem like you are saving time, multi-tasking can be more time consuming because you are constantly switching your attention. This often makes focusing on a specific task more difficult. Additionally, the following strategies may help you increase focus and reduce distractions during classes or study time:

Reducing Distractions in Class

1. Put Your Phone on Do Not Disturb: the expanded access to the world available to individuals through cell phones can be highly captivating to even the most dedicated of students. To reduce distraction and help you stay focused during class, try putting your phone on "do not disturb". This will silence any distracting notifications from text messages, apps, and social media profiles and can allow you to pay attention and be fully present in class.

An alternative method is to place your phone out of your sight in another room than the one you are doing your homework in. Similar to the old adage, "out of sight, out of mind", this method will allow you to focus better because you have physically removed the temptation to grab your phone while studying.

2. Sit Closer to the Front: The seat a student chooses in class may impact their classroom learning experience. Seats closer to the front of the classroom typically come with less distractions for students.These seats not only allow students to hear the professor and see the board better, but also lower the likelihood of students getting distracted by other students in other parts of the classroom.

3. Fidget and Sensory Items: Students who struggle with attention or hyperactivity may benefit from the use of a quiet fidget or sensory item during class time. Fidget spinners, stress balls, sensory bracelets and rings, and pop fidgets are some of the most commonly used sensory items.

Reducing Distractions While Studying

1. Establish a Consistent Study Routine: The most effective way to study may vary across subjects and between individuals, however, establishing a consistent study routine has been shown to raise effectiveness and performance for many students.

2. Clear Your "Space": Having a cluttered or disorganized study space may influence a student's ability to focus and get their school work done. To help reduce distractions, both the student's electronic and physical environments should only have the necessities. Specifically, students should close all unnecessary browser tabs and try to keep their study space as tidy and organized as possible.

3. Focus on One Thing at a Time: Multitasking can be extremely tempting to students who have busy schedules. Because they are so busy, these students believe that working on multiple tasks at once can save time; however, oftentimes this is not the case. Splitting attention and time between several tasks reduces the quality of work. To avoid having to go back several times to fix typos and accidental errors, designate specific times to complete each task. By focusing on one task at a time, students can save themselves time and energy in the long run.

4. Use Time Management Applications:

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Time Management Apps

  ❖ **Forest** allows students to grow and plant trees based on the amount of time a

student spends working on assignments. For more information about **Forest**, please click [HERE](#).

- ❖ **Remember the Milk** is designed to help students manage their time and stay on schedule through a system of todos and reminders. For more information about **Remember the Milk**, please click [HERE](#).

- ❖ **Todoist** is a time management and organization app that helps students stay organized within a hectic daily schedule. In addition, this app allows students the flexibility to easily move uncompleted tasks to times that would work better for them. For more information about **Todoist**, please click [HERE](#).

Stay Healthy

Taking time to relax and do nothing often helps you rejuvenate physically and mentally, enabling you to accomplish tasks more effectively. To promote greater wellbeing, engage in self-care, take breaks, sleep, and make plans to socialize with friends and family.

Self-Care and Studying: Tips for Success

1. Sleep. Is. Important.

2. Establish healthy and consistent eating habits.

3. Take deep breaths, stretch and mediate.

4. Build "you time" into your daily routine.

If you haven't already explored their resources, I would encourage you to look into the resources provided by the [Health and Wellness Center](#) and [Counseling Center](#) on campus.

Eisenhower Matrix Template

	Important	Not Important
Urgent	**Quadrant 1**	**Quadrant 2**
Not Urgent	**Quadrant 3**	**Quadrant 4**