Having the Time of Your Life... With Effective Time Management

Time is your most precious resource, and one that cannot be replenished. Remember the business adage – “Time is money,” well academically rephrased “Time is grades” because there are only 24 hours per day. You must decide how you will effectively use your 24 hrs to sleep, eat, address personal needs, attend class, study, socialize, work, exercise, commute, etc. The differences between having an effective time management plan and lacking one are increased stress, forgotten or missed meetings and assignments, too little sleep, not enough prep time, and an overly hectic life – you meet yourself coming and going! The good news is that effective time manage is easier than ever with various technology tools at your fingertips, reflection about how you function at your best, and a plan you can live with because you personalize and commit to it.

Developing Your Effective Time Management Plan

1. **Know yourself and personalize your plan** – are you a morning or evening person, like to group things together or spread them out, one-size does not fit all in developing a time management plan.

2. **Schedule fixed / mandatory time commitments first** – schedule your classes, work, sport or music practice, labs, etc. first. Then, schedule commitments that have flexibility next.

3. **The devil is in the details** – if you need to get it done, the put it on the schedule. You need to know where your time needs to go or does go (time audit), to how to modify or correct anything that isn’t working. While you don’t need to schedule bathroom breaks, you do need to determine when you will rise and retire, eat meals, commute, etc.

4. **Find hidden time** – all the gaps or unoccupied cells on your time management plan are opportunities to be creative, flexible, and efficient in getting work done. Don’t squander these time

5. **Always have “pocket work”** – bring something to do or read everywhere you go in case you get a time bonus – waiting for class to start, someone who’s late to an appointment, etc. Make the most of your bonus time!

6. **Multi-task your free time** – practice your speech while you shower, review your to do list for the day, maximize each moment.

7. **Record lectures, use podcasts, etc.** – you can be learning on your walk to class or commute, waiting in a lunch line, etc.

8. **Short term v. long term plan** – weekly time plan to see at a glance what needs to get done on a weekly basis. Semester plan to anticipate and prevent conflicts as the semester progresses. If you focus only on a week by week to do list, then the term paper, presentation, or project which needs more time to complete or gather resources is likely to blow your time budget.

9. **Be aware of “Parkinson’s Law” – work expands to fit the time allotted.”** You may have hear the advice – give work to busy people, they’ll find a way to get it done. Set and meet your deadlines to get things done.

10. **You deserve a break today, really** – be sure to schedule sanity or down time. You can’t go at full tilt all day long, you need to take regular breaks to refresh your mind. Remember to reward yourself for accomplishing your goals – a latte, a short game of Angry Birds, whatever floats your boat. Learning how to balance work with play is critical for a successful and happy life.

11. **Use the OHIO Rule** – “Only handle it once.” Act on incoming information when you get it – read it, act on it, file it, and throw it out unless you need it. Avoid becoming a
12. **Use the Urgent / Important Matrix** – to help make decisions.

Today well lived, makes every yesterday a dream of happiness,
And every tomorrow a vision of hope, look well therefore to this day.
Sanskrit proverb

**Sources:**

**Internet tools for time management:**

**Calendars**
Millikin Groupwise mail – calendar function
www.google.com/calendar
www.30boxes.com

**Lists** www.gubb.net and www.rememberthemilk.com

**Urgent/Important Matrix**