

Time Management for Studying

You can do everything you need to do and have some leisure time if you are realistic and manage your time well. This secret of success is one that everyone can follow in college and throughout life. In college, managing your time requires deciding what needs to be done, setting priorities, knowing and using your peak functioning time, maintaining your schedule, making necessary adjustments and following the “A, E, I, O, U’s” of time management for studying.

Attitude: Never underestimate the power of approaching your study time with a positive attitude. An “I can do it” attitude provides a good foundation for whatever you are studying or doing. Remember that your performance rises or lowers depending on your expectations so that if you think you cannot accomplish something, you probably won’t. On the other hand, if you believe that you can do something, you will be successful.

Environment: Find a study-friendly environment away from the distractions of family, friends, sleep, television, and telephone. Sit in an upright chair that is reasonably comfortable rather than lying on a bed so that you are not tempted to fall asleep. Also, make sure that you have adequate lighting and all of the supplies you need.

Internal Body Clock: People, like the sun, the moon, the tide, and animals, are all subject to their own internal body clock called *circadian rhythm*, meaning about a day. This internal body clock regulates the time when you function better and when you don’t. Consider whether you are more of an *owl*, preferring evening studying, or whether you accomplish more in the morning as a *lark*. Remember that as a student, your priority is to study, so you reserve your peak study time for that purpose.

Order: Keep in mind that the order in which you study various subjects can make a great difference. Study your most difficult or least favorite subject first when you are most alert, and can understand and retain the material more easily. You will feel a sense of accomplishment by completing this studying and not running the risk of procrastinating.

If you cannot persuade yourself to study your most difficult or least favorite subject first, then motivate yourself by studying your easiest subject first.

Understanding: If you set a realistic goal for your study time, you will likely accomplish it and meet your deadlines. Plan to take a 5 – 10 minute break every 45 – 50 minutes. During the break time, do something physical, such as exercising or doing your laundry, rather than thinking about studying. Also, capitalize on your preferred learning style so that you can understand and retain the material better.

Finally, you will understand and remember more material if you study in shorter blocks of time rather than longer periods, and if you review the material in several sessions before a test.