

Time Management

Pursuing your academic goals, while also balancing work, sports/hobbies, and a social life can be challenging, but also rewarding. With the right effort and attitude, time management is a skill that can be learned. The “3Ps of Time Management” can help get you started.

Prioritize

In school and in life, you have tasks which are important and tasks which are not so important. Tasks can also be broken down into urgent and not urgent. The table below can help you recognize where you spend most of your time and learn how to better manage your priorities. Every task you have in a day will fall into one of the following four quadrants:

	Urgent	Not Urgent
Important	deadline projects, pressing problems, emergencies <div style="text-align: right;">1.</div>	Long-term projects, planning your week, exercise, nutrition, relationship-building <div style="text-align: right;">2.</div>
Not Important	<div style="text-align: right;">3.</div> Meeting other people’s priorities and expectations.	<div style="text-align: right;">4.</div> Social media, video games, television, busywork

What percent of your time do you currently spend in each?

Quadrant 1:

Quadrant 2:

Quadrant 3:

Quadrant 4:

- Many students who struggle with time management report spending the overwhelming majority of their time in quadrants 1, 3, and 4.
- Prioritization begins with choosing to spend more time in quadrant #2
- Although you will still spend time in the other quadrants, over the course of a semester, prioritizing important and non-urgent tasks (quadrant #2) will help you stay on track and reduce stress.

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Plan

Monthly

- A monthly calendar is a tool you can use to stay on track with all of your tasks and priorities.
- For your calendar to be effective, you must include every commitment and upcoming deadline. It also must be reviewed and updated daily.
- Here are a few options for monthly calendars:
 - Dry erase - Lakehead four month wall calendar
 - Notebook Calendar - LUSU Day Planner
 - Electronic - Google Calendar
 - The Student Success Centre strongly recommends using Google Calendar. Electronic calendars are easy to adjust, available at all times, and can't be lost or forgotten. Additionally, with your Lakehead email account, your course schedule is synced into your calendar.
 - To access Google Calendar, click on the nine small boxes on the top right corner when logged into your Lakehead email.
 - You can also download the Google Calendar App on your phone, which will allow you to review and update your calendar on the go. The Google Calendar App is available on the Google Play Store and Apple App Store

Weekly

- Once you have all of your priorities set up on your monthly calendar, the next step is to identify times during the week you can devote to completing schoolwork.
- Using the table below, write in your class times, hobbies, work and all other commitments. Next find consistent times you can devote to schoolwork every week.

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Morning							
Afternoon							
Evening							

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Daily

- Daily to-do lists are another essential time management tool.
- When creating a to-do list, it helps to set goals for what you want to complete. One helpful technique for doing this is known as SMART goals.
- SMART goals are:
 - **S**pecific - what, where, when, how?
 - **M**easurable - will you know when the goal has been completed?
 - **A**ttainable - can you accomplish this goal with your best effort?
 - **R**elevant - does the goal matter to you?
 - **T**ime based - what is your deadline for completing this goal?
- For example: One student might begin a work session by saying to themselves “study chemistry for two hours”, but another student who sets SMART goals would say “go to the library and read pages 25-40 and answer three chapter questions from 1-3pm”.
- The student who sets SMART goals will have a clear focus during their work session. After the session has completed, has review their progress as they work.

Perform

- Once you have complete the prioritization and planning stages, the next step is to perform.
- This means focusing on the goals you’ve set for yourself.
- It’s important to reduce distractions.
 - Find a clean, quiet, comfortable space which you use only to complete work
 - Put away your phone until after your work session
 - Take short breaks to recharge if needed
- Give yourself a small reward after you’ve completed the goals of your work session.

Final thoughts

By applying the 3Ps of prioritizing, planning, and performing, you can begin to manage your time more effectively. Keep in mind that time management is a skill that can always be improved, no matter how skill you currently are. It’s worth it, because students with time management skills are better able to handle stress and report experiencing greater enjoyment and success at university. Time management is also a skill that will serve you well in your career and for the rest of your life.

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