

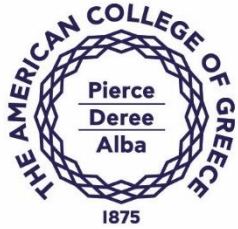


Time Management Strategies

Have you heard yourself saying, “I would like to exercise, but I don’t have the time,” or “I know I need to relax, but I just can’t find the time”? You may never find the time to do all that you want, but you can learn to manage time more effectively and this will certainly reduce the stress of daily life. Three common factors that negatively impact time management for college students are perfectionism, over-commitment and procrastination.

Perfectionists often spend an inordinate amount of time rewriting papers, reorganizing notes, and rearranging their work space to the point where they sacrifice social interaction and sleep. They also set unreachable goals. This fruitless effort increases stress and encroaches on time needed for other academic projects and social functions that are integral to a fulfilling college experience. If perfectionism is a problem for you, try not to put so much pressure on yourself. Focus on *doing* your best, not *being* the best.



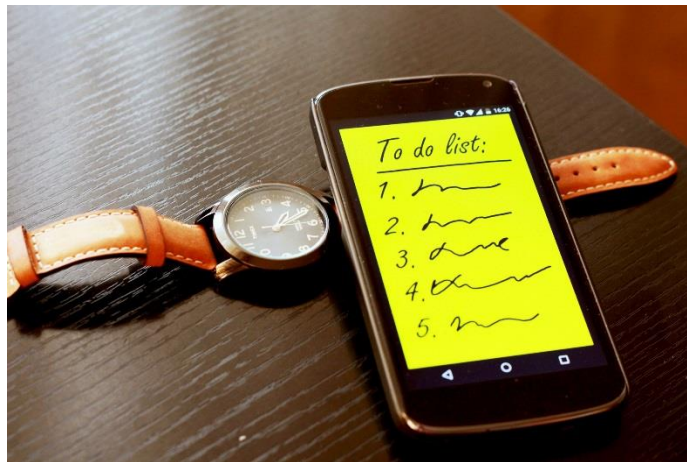


Know the Facts

Over-committers are less concerned with the quality of their efforts. Instead, they have a hard time saying no and take on project after project and activity after activity. They may feel they are missing out if they say no to something.

Procrastinators are by far the most common type of student. Although reasons for procrastination vary, it often camouflages self-doubt and perhaps perfectionism or a reluctance to make changes. People who set unreasonably high standards may protect their self-esteem by procrastinating: if they fail to complete a project, their work will never be evaluated.

If procrastination or another time-related stressor is a problem for you, try some or all of the following strategies for managing your time more productively and creatively.



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SET PRIORITIES

Divide your tasks into three groups: essential, important, and trivial. Focus on the first two and ignore the third.

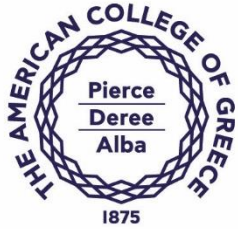
SCHEDULE YOUR TIME

Use a monthly calendar or planner to mark down deadlines, tests, activities, holidays, trips.

Use a weekly/daily planner to block out times for transportation, classes, studying, exercise, social life. Schedule studying for the times you are most productive. Use your schedule to allow for eight hours of sleep a night and adequate time for eating a well-balanced diet. Both are vital to maximum efficiency during the day.

Start by allowing at least two hours of study for every hour of class time. Then adjust accordingly to master your material, not just cover it.

Make a daily "to do" list. This list can be the real secret to your success if you do it every day. Some people end the day by listing tasks for the next day, while others prefer to make a "to do" list in the morning. Mark the activities that have a high priority today and will require some special attention.



Know the Facts

Mind & Spirit



DEVELOP A GAME PLAN AND BREAK LONG-TERM GOALS UP INTO A SERIES OF SHORT-TERM GOALS

Allow at least two nights to study for a test.

For a research paper, allow a week for researching at the library, and set deadlines for an outline, a rough draft, and a final draft. Consider working backward from the due date to help you estimate how much time you will need for each part. Don't leave printing the paper out until the night before it is due, or you may find yourself facing an emergency you can't deal with at the last minute: like not having any paper or the power going out.

IDENTIFY TIME ROBBERS

Keep track of how long you spend on tasks for a week. You may be surprised to find how much time you spend surfing the net or doing other tasks like rearranging your desk or room. Plan to do such things when you aren't pressed for time.

DEVELOP AN EFFICIENT STUDY STYLE

Some experts recommend studying for 50-minute periods with 10 minute breaks in between. During the breaks, call a friend, have a healthy snack, or go for a quick walk.

When reading, don't just highlight text; write notes in the margins of every paragraph to help you retain what you have read. When memorizing, write out on a piece of paper the topics or words you are having trouble remembering. Don't waste time rereading what you already know well.

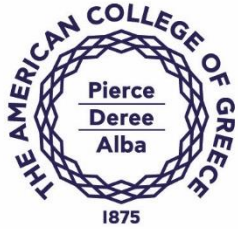


DON'T PROCRASTINATE

Start with the assignment you like least and get it over with. Try and figure out why you don't want to start something and think of alternative ways to get it done. If you put off going to the library to read, is the problem getting to the library or the reading itself? If it is the trip to the library, arrange to walk over with a friend whose company you enjoy.

VISUALIZE THE ACHIEVEMENT OF YOUR GOALS

Mentally rehearse how you will achieve a goal and the end result. This is something done by athletes, public speakers, and anyone else who has to convince themselves that they will succeed.



Know the Facts

Mind & Spirit



Other suggestions:

STUDY AT THE SAME TIME EVERY DAY

In so far as it is possible, you should schedule certain hours for studying almost every day in a habitual, systematic way. Having regular hours at least five days a week will make it easier to habitually follow a schedule and to maintain an active approach to study.

MAKE USE OF FREE HOURS DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

The hours between classes may be your most valuable study time, and the most frequently wasted. You can use such time effectively by reviewing the material and editing the notes from the preceding class or studying the material to be discussed in the following class.

SPACE OUT STUDY PERIODS

Fifty to 90 minutes of study at a time for each course works best. Relaxation periods of ten or 15 minutes should be scheduled between study periods. It is more efficient to study hard for a set period of time and then stop for a few minutes, than to attempt to study on indefinitely.

PLAN FOR WEEKLY REVIEWS

At least one hour each week for each class (distinct from study time) should be scheduled. The weekend is a good time for review.

LEAVE SOME UNSCHEDULED TIME FOR FLEXIBILITY

This is important. Lack of flexibility is the major reason why schedules fail. Students tend to over-schedule themselves.

ALLOT TIME FOR RECREATIONAL, CAMPUS, AND FAMILY ACTIVITIES

When forced to deviate from your schedule (as will inevitably occur), you should trade time rather than steal it from your schedule. Thus, if you have an unexpected visitor at a time reserved for study, you can substitute an equal amount of study time for the period you had set aside for recreation (or use some of the time you left unscheduled).

