

RA-facilitated CommUNITY Learning Series

This program is to help students learn how to manage their time at college and later in life. This program is to be introduced to residents as a chance to work smarter, not harder, by organizing their time. A time will need to be identified for every week so that a group can meet for up to 30 minutes. Ensure that the scheduled times and locations are set beforehand for those willing to firmly commit to all four dates. Pens will be needed at each session.

At Each Session

- Ask each participant to share what they accomplished since the last session, related to the goal they set the previous week. Be encouraging and supportive. Perhaps have prizes for those who made progress.
 - Read the current week's tips. Use aids (e.g. Panther Planners) to clarify points.
 - Hand out the week's self-assessment, directing residents to:
 - Read each item and put an X on the line that identifies where their current habits are.
 - Add an X on each line to identify where they can realistically achieve with self-discipline.
 - Pick the top two that each believes he/she can realistically do between now and the next session.
 - Have each person describe what they want to change and why it's important to them. Ask for tips from participants on how they are successful with things that others want to change. This can be very valuable for providing connections among participants and generating usable tips.
 - Ask each participant to identify at the end of their self-assessment, in writing what they'll be doing to succeed at the change they want to make.
 - Ask participants to share what they plan to do.
 - Thank everyone for coming and wish everyone the best in pursuing their new goal for that week.
-

WEEK ONE

The Basics

Most college students learn very quickly the value of our time when we're struggling to balance work, school and a social life. With so much to do it can be easy to become overwhelmed, stressed and eventually burnt out. We can help ourselves stay sane and still get everything done by [developing good time management skills, early on](#). Over the next four weeks, we'll consider some great ways to make the most of our time, stay productive, have fun to work smarter, not harder! This week we'll start with some basics of time management.

- 1. Write things down.** With so much going on it's hard to remember every little thing you have to do unless you write it down of course. Get a student planner or a notebook to take down all your important engagements, assignments and more.
- 2. Don't take too many hours.** Unless you're ultra ambitious, taking more than 18 hours a semester is unnecessary and will result in extra stress and less time to concentrate on each class. Take a reasonable amount of classes each semester so you won't feel completely overwhelmed.
- 3. Stay organized.** You'll save yourself loads of time later by staying organized from the get-go. Instead of having to hunt around for notes, assignments and misplaced papers, keeping them all in one place makes studying and doing homework easier and less stressful.
- 4. Focus on one thing at a time.** Multitasking may seem like a good idea, but really you'll get more done by focusing

your energy on one task at a time. Once you've finished one thing you can check it off your list and move onto the next.

5. Take charge of your time. At the end of the day, only one person has control over how you spend your time, and that's you. Take charge of your day, get important things done and learn to say no if you have to.

6. Resist the urge to [procrastinate](#). Everyone knows how hard it is to want to stay in and study for finals when it's perfect outside or you've just gotten a new video game. The world is full of distractions, and to really be effective at managing your time you have to find a way to ignore them when it counts. Give yourself little breaks as rewards for not putting off tasks.

7. Avoid taking classes on material you've already learned. This may seem like a "well duh" sort of thing, but many colleges will require you to take courses that may be over things you already know. See if you can test out of these courses instead to save yourself the time and effort of studying things you already know.

8. Get an early start to your day. College students aren't usually known as early bird types, but you can be doing yourself a huge favor by getting up early. You'll have more time during the day to work on homework and study, which will leave your evenings free to do things you enjoy.

9. Learn material the first time around. If you don't understand something in your classes don't just gloss over it and assume you'll learn it later. Take the time to ensure you learn it the first time. It can help you to more easily understand concepts that follow and will save you the time of revisiting the topic later.

10. Control your surroundings. While you can't always make your study environment distraction free, you can do your best to create an environment that is most conducive to getting work done. Go to the library, put on headphones or whatever it takes to keep you from straying off task.

11. Have confidence in your abilities. Sometimes your schedule will seem almost impossible. Have confidence that you can do things, and you may surprise yourself when you truly step up to the challenge. You'll never know how much you can do unless you test yourself, so give yourself opportunities to shine, even under pressure.

12. Get the most out of class. If you're just going to class to sleep or talk to your friends, you're wasting time you could be using to do other things. Read over class materials ahead of time so you have a rough idea of what class will be about. This will allow you to concentrate on the elements of the lessons that are truly important and make it easier for you to study in the future.

13. Know what's important to you. Everyone has a different idea of what they want to take out of college. Some people want to get perfect grades and others are more concerned with making friends and building relationships. Figure out what things are most important to you and concentrate the bulk of your energies on those.

WEEK TWO

Studying

While you may not have that many hours of classes each week, you still have to account for the time you'll need to spend studying for them. Here are some tips on how you can fit your study time into your schedule.

14. Take advantage of downtime. If you take a long bus ride each day or have some spare time while you do your laundry, why not use it to get a little studying in? The less time you waste during downtime, the more time you'll have later.

15. Set goals. It can be hard to get motivated to study when you don't have a clear goal in mind. Set a goal of how much you want to get done and try your best to meet it.

16. Use the syllabus. Your [syllabus](#) will let you know when and how fast you'll be covering topics in your class. You can use it to get ahead when you have extra time or to know when and what you'll need to work on each day to keep up.

17. Work to boost your memory. You'll spend much less time [studying](#) if you can remember what you study the first time around. Easier said than done, however, but you can play games, read books and eat foods that will help keep you at your maximum memory potential.

18. Learn what works for you. Different methods work better for different people. If you're struggling with a certain way you've been studying, try something else. You may find it takes you less time and that you get a lot more out of it

by making a simple change.

19. Study difficult subjects first. There's no sense in putting off the worst for last ? it will only encourage you to procrastinate and get less done in the long run. Get the hard stuff out of the way and you'll have a much happier rest of the day.

20. Work in short blocks with breaks. You won't be doing yourself any favors by pulling marathon study sessions with no breaks. Studies have [shown](#) that the most effective way to get through material is to go through it in smaller sessions and to give your mind and eyes time to rest in between with short breaks.

21. Team up with classmates. There's no need to study alone if you can get more out of working with your classmates. Sometimes collaboration can be a much faster way to get through material, and it can be a great help if you're struggling with certain concepts. Just make sure your study sessions don't get too off track.

22. Avoid skipping class. While everyone skips a class now and again to catch up on sleep or to get other things done they feel are more pressing, try not to make a habit of it. Going to class will make it easier for you to keep up with the material and will give you the chance to ask questions.

23. Create a strategy. You'll get the most out of your study time if you go into it with a strategy in mind. Focus on certain subjects first or spend a little extra time on topics that you struggle with. Whatever you do, make sure it works for you and makes the most of your time.

WEEK THREE

Homework

Homework is rarely fun but you still need to get it done, and the sooner the better.

Here are some tips on making homework as painless and time-friendly as possible.

24. Prioritize. If you've got a number of homework assignments, focus on the ones that are due the soonest or that will take you the most time first. Once you get those out of the way you'll feel better about concentrating on the others.

25. Don't wait until the last minute. While for most people this is easier said than done, waiting until the last minute to complete homework is not only stressful but it can mean that you get a lot less out of the work that you put in. Give yourself enough leeway with time to ensure you won't have to rush around to get things done.

26. Get ahead if you can. If you find that you have some extra time in your day, use it to get ahead in the classes that you can. You'll thank yourself later, on a day when you have loads of extra work to do and you'll have one less thing to worry about.

27. Assign a specific amount of time the project should take. One way to keep yourself moving forward and not to waste time is to assign a specific amount of time that you think a project should take and try to fit it into that time frame. Sometimes this isn't always possible, but if you know about how long it takes you to complete a certain kind of assignment, it can help keep you on task.

28. Find your peak hours. Everyone has hours of the day when they simply perform better mentally. Figure out what your peak times are, and do your hardest work during these times so that you'll have the energy to get through them more quickly.

29. Break up large projects. Don't let yourself get overwhelmed with huge research projects. Break them up into sections which will be easier to tackle and will allow you to complete a small part of the project each day.

30. Work smarter. You don't have to work harder to get more done, just smarter. If you know you have two projects that need research at the library, work on both at the same time and save yourself an extra trip.

31. Set mini deadlines. If you know you're a chronic procrastinator, you can help keep yourself working on homework assignments, especially larger ones, by creating mini-deadlines within the assignment. This will help to keep you working through the assignment and prevent it from all having to be done at the last minute.

32. Ask for help. Sometimes you'll have assignments that you simply won't understand no matter how many times you look through them. While figuring things out on your own is rewarding, at a certain point it can be much more time efficient to simply ask for help from your professors or classmates.

33. Don't put off projects you're dreading.

No one wants to think about starting a giant research project that isn't due until the end of the semester. The problem is that projects like these usually get put off until the end of the semester, and then you have very little time to put them together. If you're dreading a project, do it little by little or just get it out of the way all at once. You'll feel a million times better once it's out of the way and you won't have to worry about it anymore.

WEEK FOUR

Scheduling

It's essential for time management that you keep a schedule and stick to it.

34. Avoid over-commitment. While it would be great if you could cram in every activity you'd like to into your schedule, the reality is that that probably isn't going to happen. Give yourself a little breathing room between classes and study time to simply relax, watch tv or even eat dinner.

35. Use a calendar or planner. Don't try to keep your schedule in your head. Eventually you'll forget something, and it might be something pretty important. Keep track of your assignments and engagements on a calendar, either online or off, so you can't forget things easily.

36. Account for the unknown. Even the best schedules can be upset by an unexpected event. Whether you have a birthday party to attend that you didn't know about or you somehow get sick or injured, make sure your schedule allows for enough flexibility to accommodate life's little surprises.

37. Keep track of how your time is spent. One thing that can help you to make a better schedule for yourself is to see how long it really takes you to get certain tasks done. Keep a record of the time you spend on each thing so you can get a better idea of how much time to allow yourself in the future.

38. Stick to your plan. If you've got a plan of how to get an assignment done, try to stick to it. It's easy to become distracted and to want to slack off, but if you stick to your initial plan you'll have more free time in the long run.

39. Work out a schedule at the beginning of each week. Figure out what you need to get done each week on Sunday or Monday so that you know what to expect and how your week will play out.

40. Write down major tests and due dates at the beginning of the semester. Your syllabus will likely tell you the dates when major projects, test and assignments will be due. Put these dates on your calendar immediately so that you'll be able to work around them.

41. Set up daily study times. One thing you can easily add to your schedule is a few hours each day that are just dedicated to studying. Sometimes you'll need less time and sometimes more, but making room ahead of time can be very beneficial to getting things done.

42. Keep trying new systems. Your first way of scheduling yourself and managing your time may not be as effective as you like, and you may find that you're wasting a lot of time. As the old adage goes, if at first you don't succeed try, try again. Eventually you'll find a method that suits you.

43. Create realistic to-do lists. Who wouldn't love to get a whole two page to-do list done each day? The reality is that most of us simply don't have the time or the willpower to get that much done in a day. Give yourself realistic goals and you won't end up disappointed when you don't finish everything you planned.

WEEK FIVE

Work

[Students who work and go to school](#) have to work extra hard to balance their responsibilities. Here are some ways you can make the most of your time at work.

44. Find work on campus. You'll save yourself a lot of time commuting if you can find a job that's located on campus. This will make it much easier to go to work between classes.

45. Study and work at the same time.

If your job allows you to, try reading or working on assignments while you're at work. While not every job will offer this luxury, if you can do it, make sure to take advantage of it.

46. Keep a flexible schedule. Ensure that you find a job that allows you to keep a fairly flexible schedule. Otherwise you may end up unemployed if you need time off to study or to prepare for exams.

47. Try work-study programs first. Many schools offer work-study programs that allow you to work on campus. Some may even give you college credits for your work so long as it applies to your major.

48. Freelance. One way to ensure that you can work when you have time to work is to offer freelance services. Artists can paint portraits and design websites, and many studious types can offer their tutoring services to local high school or grade school children.

Personal Time

While doing work and learning is the main goal of college, having a good time isn't far behind. Here are some ways to help you have fun while maintaining your time management.

49. Use fun things as motivators. There's nothing that works as motivation to get things done like the promise of doing something fun once it's completed. Use this to your advantage to speed up your work.

50. Always make time for things you enjoy. Whether you're going to college fresh out of high school or going back as an adult, it's important to make time for the things you enjoy doing amidst all your school assignments. Ensure that you're scheduling in enough time for fun so you won't get burnt out.

51. Allow time for clubs, sports and other activities. If you're the type of person that loves to participate in clubs or sporting activities, limit the amount of hours you take so that you'll have enough time to enjoy playing and bonding with other students. Remember, this is also an important part of your college experience.

52. Take care of yourself. Having too many classes on your plate can sometimes mean that you don't have enough food on it. Make sure you are eating well and that you are making time to stay healthy even when you're super busy. Otherwise you could end up sick.

53. Learn to say no. Perhaps one of the most important things in time management is learning to say no, even to things you enjoy doing. Sometimes turning down friends' invitations is an integral part of making your life easier, however hard it may be to do.

54. Don't schedule out sleep. Sleep is incredibly important, and if you're not getting enough, your grades could start to suffer. Always make sure to schedule yourself an adequate amount of time each night to rest and recuperate.

55. Leave time for yourself. While hanging out with friends is fun, sometimes you just need to set aside time for doing things that you like to do alone.

56. Understand that all your time is important. The time you spend doing assignments is no more important than the time you spend relaxing and being with friends. Understand that your life has to maintain a balance, and schedule your time accordingly.

57. Set boundaries. Don't let your schoolwork overtake your life. Set some guidelines as to how much time you'll dedicate to work each day and how much time you'll dedicate to enjoying yourself. This will help you to maintain more of a balanced life and keep you from getting too burnt out with school.

(Based on materials from [College at Home](#))

Community

Source URL: <http://uni.edu/dor/housing/time-management>