

Whether we realize it or not, we are always making time management decisions. The following are important points about time management:

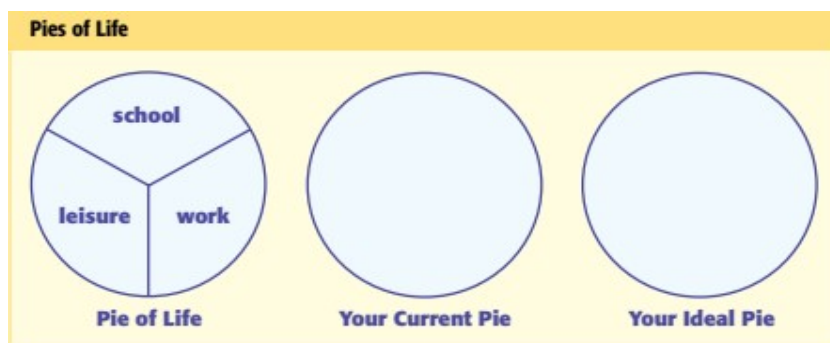
- In reality, you do not really manage time; you manage yourself and your life events in relation to time.
- Your success as a student will be strongly affected by the combination of two time-related factors: how much time you spend in study and how well you use that time.
- The more time you put into the various tasks of reading and thinking about your subject, preparing for exams or fine-tuning your assignments, the more likely it is that you will do well.
- If you both spend more time in study and manage that time effectively, you are much more likely to achieve well and have a great time as a student.

1/ Analyzing your Current Use of Time

a) The Pie of Life

The **Pie of Life** is a graphic representation that shows how much time you dedicate to each of the three main areas of your life: *school*, *work*, and *leisure* (see **Figure 1**). A balanced Pie of Life is not necessarily divided into three equal parts; the amounts of time dedicated to school, work, and leisure vary according to an individual's circumstances, goals, and values.

Figure 1



Achieving your ideal Pie of Life requires a willingness to examine the ways you currently use time and to explore new strategies that will improve your time-management skills.

b) Time Log

A **Time Log** is a record of what you do each hour of the day for one week (**Figure 2**). To create your own Time Log, just write down what you did in the morning, in the afternoon, and in the evening. Some students prefer to record their activities and then copy them on to the log at a later time. However, if you wait until the end of the day, you may have trouble remembering what you did. You may find it helpful to colour code your Time Log.

Figure 2

Time Log

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
12-6 AM	SLEEP						
6-7:00	SLEEP						
7-8:00	Get up, get ready, eat breakfast					SLEEP	SLEEP
8-9:00	Commute to school					Get up	Get up
9-10:00	PE Class	Study Math	PE Class	Study Math	PE Class	Breakfast	Breakfast
10-11:00	Math Class	Math Class	Math Class	Math Class	Study Math	Career Class	Get ready
11-12 NOON	Study Math	LUNCH	Study Math	LUNCH	with TUTOR	Study Career	CHURCH
12-1:00	LUNCH	Computer Class	LUNCH	Computer Class	LUNCH	ERRANDS	CHURCH
1-2:00	Reading Class	Computer Class	Reading Class	Computer Class	Reading Class	LUNCH	LUNCH
2-3:00	Study Reading	Lab-Study Computer	Study Reading	Lab-Study Computer	Study Reading	CHORES	LEISURE
3-4:00	Study Reading	Lab-Study Computer	FLEX	Lab-Study Computer	FLEX	CHORES	LEISURE
4-5:00	Commute home					CHORES	LEISURE
5-6:00	DINNER						LEISURE
6-7:00	LEISURE	LEISURE	LEISURE	LEISURE	WORK	WORK	DINNER
7-8:00	Study Reading	WORKOUT	Study Math	WORKOUT	WORK	WORK	Study Math
8-9:00	Study Reading		Study Computer		WORK	WORK	Study Computer
9-10:00	LEISURE		LEISURE		WORK	WORK	FLEX
10-11:00	LEISURE		LEISURE		WORK	WORK	PLAN WEEK
11-12 AM	SLEEP				WORK	WORK	SLEEP

c) Prospective-Retrospective Calendar

A Prospective-Retrospective Calendar (see **Figure 3**) allows you to compare what you plan to do on a given day (**prospective**) with what you actually do (**retrospective**). What you do during each hour of the day is not important here. Instead, the key is how well you stick to your plan. Just setting up a plan for each hour of the day often provides sufficient motivation for completing it. Some students who try this activity are surprised to find that they faithfully follow their time plans.

FIGURE 3.4
Michelle's Prospective-Retrospective Calendar for Monday

Time	Prospective	Retrospective	Evaluation
7:00 A.M.	sleep	slept	+
8:00 A.M.	sleep	slept	+
9:00 A.M.	shower/dress/eat	showered/dressed/ate	+
10:00 A.M.	history class	history class	+
11:00 A.M.	do history	washed hair	-
12:00 P.M.	go to lunch	ate lunch	+
1:00 P.M.	homework for Tues. classes	watched soaps	-
2:00 P.M.	homework for Tues. classes	watched soaps	-
3:00 P.M.	soccer practice	soccer practice	+
4:00 P.M.	soccer practice	soccer practice	+
5:00 P.M.	soccer practice	soccer practice	+
6:00 P.M.	eat supper	ate supper	+
7:00 P.M.	finish Tues. assignments	went to mall	-
8:00 P.M.	read	ate at mall	-
9:00 P.M.	shower	watched a movie	-
10:00 P.M.	read	watched a movie	-
11:00 P.M.	watch news	watched news	+
12:00 A.M.	sleep	slept	+

3/ Identifying Time Available for Study

Identifying how much time you have available for study is the next step in setting up a good time plan. This involves looking at how much of your time is committed to other activities and also how much time you, as an individual, need to complete your work. You should complete a **Fixed Commitment Calendar (Figure 4)**

Fixed commitments are things you do the same time every day or every week. Thus, when completing your calendar, you should first write in your classes. You also should write in hours when you are asleep (not naps), mealtimes (regular times for meals) and work hours. The rest of hours represent time available to study.

Figure 4

Greg's Fixed Commitment Calendar

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
7:00 A.M.	sleep	sleep	sleep	sleep	sleep	sleep	sleep
8:00 A.M.	shower/ dress/eat	shower/ dress/eat	shower/ dress/eat	shower/ dress/eat	shower/ dress/eat	sleep	sleep
9:00 A.M.	Algebra class	lift weights	Algebra class	lift weights	Algebra class	sleep	sleep
10:00 A.M.	lift weights	lift weights		lift weights	lift weights	shower/ dress	shower/ dress
11:00 A.M.	English class	History class	English class	History class	English class	eat	eat
12:00 P.M.		eat		eat		work	watch football
1:00 P.M.	eat		eat		eat	work	watch football
2:00 P.M.	Sociology class		Sociology class		Sociology class	work	watch football
3:00 P.M.						work	watch football
4:00 P.M.	practice	practice	practice	practice	practice	work	watch football
5:00 P.M.	practice	practice	practice	practice	practice		work
6:00 P.M.	eat	eat	eat	eat	eat	eat	work
7:00 P.M.							work
8:00 P.M.					out	out	work
9:00 P.M.					out	out	work
10:00 P.M.					out	out	
11:00 P.M.	TV	TV	TV	TV	out	out	
12:00 A.M.	sleep	sleep	sleep	sleep	out	out	sleep
1:00 A.M.	sleep	sleep	sleep	sleep	out	out	sleep
2:00 A.M.	sleep	sleep	sleep	sleep	sleep	sleep	sleep
Hours Available for Study <u>34</u> Hours Needed for Study <u>32</u>							

4/ Organizing Time

Once you have set up a time plan that allows you enough time to complete your work, you need to learn how to organize your time so that it can be used efficiently. The following are helpful tools to organize your time:

a) Create an assignment calendar

An **Assignment Calendar** includes all of your assignments, quizzes, and exams. Seeing what you have to do for each day of the semester is the first step in planning your study time. To complete your **Assignment Calendar**, write in the name of the month, and number the days of the month. Next, write all your assignments on your calendar. It is helpful to colour code your assignments, so you can quickly identify the work that you have to do each day. Make exams stand out on your calendar by writing them in large capital letters.

b) Set up Your Study Schedules

Well-designed schedules serve as road maps to guide you through the months of a term, through the week, and through each day. Rather than being at the mercy of time, schedules empower you and give you the ability to take control of time.

- **Term Schedules**

A **term schedule** is a month-by-month calendar that shows important events and deadlines for the entire term. You can use a regular calendar, a monthly planner, a pocket computer, an electronic organizer, or a computer calendar program for each month in your current academic term.

- **Weekly Schedules**

A **weekly schedule** is a detailed plan that serves as a guide for creating a manageable, daily routine for each day of the week. Using a weekly schedule helps you maintain a focus and helps you organize, monitor, and regulate your use of time. Unlike a time log made *after* you complete activities or tasks, a weekly schedule is made *before* you engage in the activities.

- **Daily Schedules**

A **daily schedule** is a specific list of tasks that you plan to achieve over the course of a day. It is your “***To-Do List***” that helps you move through the day efficiently. Use a sticky note, an index card, a daily planner, or an electronic organizer for your daily schedule. Each night before you go to bed, take a few minutes to prepare your “***To-Do List***” for the next day’s activities. Keep the schedule in a convenient place for quick reference.

5/ Setting Priorities to Manage Multiple Projects

Have you ever worked hard to prepare for one exam, but “sacrificed” the other? Did you spend two or three hours preparing for homework only to realize later that you should have spent that time on the exam instead? If you answered “yes”, you may have difficulty managing **multiple projects** (two or more exams, papers, or projects due during the same or overlapping time frame).

To successfully complete all your work, you need to learn how to set up your priorities by considering the two primary factors that determine how we choose to use your time: urgency and importance.

- Urgency requires immediate attention and action. Urgent tasks cannot be put off without creating problems (Urgency may affect others).

- Importance has to do with results. If something is important to you, it contributes to your mission, goals and/or values. It is important to understand that what is important to one person, may not be important to another (Importance is personal).

There are different approaches to set priorities. The Eisenhower (Priority) Matrix is very useful in prioritising tasks. The matrix consists of four (4) quadrants (***Figure 5***):

a) Quadrant 1 : Urgent and Important

These tasks are number one on your to-do list, do them first since they are unavoidable and can never be totally eliminated (e.g., crises, deadlines, problems)

b) Quadrant 2 : Not Urgent, but Important

This quadrant is where we increase our ability to do. It is about personal organisation. Tasks here are serious and if they are not completed, they may move to the first quadrant (e.g., relationships, planning).

c) Quadrant 3: Urgent but Not Important

These tasks can be put off until a bit later. If we are not careful, these can waste valuable time. Do these later (e.g., interruptions, meetings).

d) Quadrant 4: Not Urgent and Not Important

These tasks are serious time wasters. Do not bother to do these tasks unless all of your other Quadrant 1-3 tasks are completed and you have enough time. (e.g., time wasters, pleasant activities)

Figure 5

Eisenhower (Priority) Matrix

Urgent and Important	Important but not urgent
Quadrant 1	Quadrant 2
1. Crises	1. Preparation
	2. Planning
2. Pressing Problems	3. Relationship Building
	4. Self Development
3. Deadline Driven Projects	5. Develop And Empower
	6. "Purposeful" Recreation
4. Meetings, Preparations	
Urgent But Not Important	Not Important And Not Urgent
Quadrant 3	Quadrant 4
1. Interruptions, Some Phone Calls	1. Trivia
	2. Junk Mail
2. Some Mail, Some Reports	3. Some Phone Calls
	4. Time Wasters
3. Some Meetings	5. "Mindless" Escape Activities
	6. 'Socialising'

(Source: Covey, 1994, "First Things First")

6/ Time-Management Strategies

- ✓ **Study in one-hour blocks:** One effective strategy for keeping yourself motivated is to study in sixty-minute time blocks. As you schedule your study tasks, break them down so that they can be accomplished in one-hour blocks of time. Then plan to read, write, or study for fifty minutes. If you find that you can't concentrate on your work take a break.
- ✓ **Take breaks:** After each study block of fifty minutes, you should plan a ten-minute break. Be realistic about the kind of activity that you plan for a study break. Taking a ten-minute nap just will not work, and going out to play a quick game of basketball inevitably will lead to a longer game of basketball. What can you do in ten minutes? You can grab a snack, check your e-mail, or make a phone call.
- ✓ **Tackle difficult assignments first:** Do your difficult assignments first when you are the most alert. If you leave them until later time, you may find that they are even more difficult or you may decide not to do them at all.
- ✓ **Switch subjects:** Another good strategy for maintaining your motivation to study is to switch subjects so that you can get more done without becoming bored and tired.
- ✓ **Break tasks down:** You may find that breaking down your tasks into manageable units will help you accomplish your goals. Which would you rather read, a fifty-page chapter or a ten-page chapter? Most people would agree that a ten-page chapter sounds much more appealing.
- ✓ **Work ahead:** You will find college much less stressful if you stop doing Tuesday's assignments on Monday. Get into the habit of doing the work due for Tuesday on Sunday or even on Friday.