

Managing Stress Related to Time and Behavior

1. A Personal Time Survey

To begin managing your time you first need a clearer idea of how you now use your time. The Personal Time Survey will help you to estimate how much time you currently spend in typical activities. To get a more accurate estimate, you might keep track of how you spend your time for a week. This will help you get a better idea of how much time you need to prepare for each subject. It will also help you identify your time wasters. But for now complete the Personal Time Survey to get an estimate. The following survey shows the amount of time you spend on various activities. When taking the survey, estimate the amount of time spent on each item. Once you have this amount, multiply it by seven. This will give you the total time spent on the activity in one week. After each item's weekly time has been calculated, add all these times for the grand total. Subtract this from 168, the total possible hours per week.

Here We Go:

1. Number of hours of sleep each night _____ X 7 = _____

2. Number of grooming hours per day _____ X 7 = _____

3. Number of hours for meals/snacks per day - include preparation time _____ X 7 = _____

4a. Total travel time weekdays _____ X 5 = _____

4b. Total travel time weekends _____

_____ 5. Number of hours per week for regularly scheduled functions (clubs, church, get-togethers, etc.) _____

6. Number of hours per day for chores, errands, extra grooming, etc. _____ X 7 = _____

7. Number of hours of work per week _____

8. Number of hours in class per week _____

9. Number of average hours per week socializing, dates, etc. Be honest! _____

Now add up the totals: _____

Subtract the above number from 168 168 - _____ = _____

The remaining hours are the hours you have allowed yourself to study.

2. Study Hour Formula

To determine how many hours you need to study each week to get A's, use the following rule of thumb. Study two hours per hour in class for an easy class, three hours per hour in class for an average class, and four hours per hour in class for a difficult class. For example, basket weaving 101 is a relatively easy 3 hour course. Usually, a person would not do more than 6 hours of work outside of class per week. Advanced calculus is usually considered a difficult course, so it might be best to study the proposed 12 hours a week. If more hours are needed, take away some hours from easier courses, i.e., basket weaving. Figure out the time that you need to study by using the above formula for each of your classes.

Easy class credit hours	_____	x 2 =	_____
Average class credit hours	_____	x 3 =	_____
Difficult class credit hours	_____	x 4 =	_____
Total			_____

Compare this number to your time left from the survey. Now is the time when many students might find themselves a bit stressed. Just a note to ease your anxieties. It is not only the quantity of study time but also it's quality. This formula is a general guideline. Try it for a week, and make adjustments as needed.

3. Daily Schedules

There are a variety of time schedules that can fit your personality. These include engagement books, a piece of poster board tacked to a wall, or 3 x 5 cards. Once you decide upon the style, the next step is construction. It is best to allow spaces for each hour, half-hours for a busy schedule. First, put down all of the necessities; classes, work, meals, etc. Now block in your study time (remember the study time formula presented earlier). Schedule it for a time when you are energized. Also, it's best to review class notes soon after class. Make sure to schedule in study breaks, about 10 minutes each hour. Be realistic on how many courses to take. To succeed in your courses you need to have the time to study. If you find you don't have time to study and you're not socializing to an extreme, you might want to consider lightening your load. Tips for Saving Time Now that you know how you spend most of your time, take a look at it. Think about what your most important things are. Do you have enough time? Chances are that you do not. Below are some tips on how to schedule and budget your time when it seems you just don't have enough.

4. Don't be a perfectionist

Trying to be a perfect person sets you up for defeat. Nobody can be perfect. Difficult tasks usually result in avoidance and procrastination. You need to set achievable goals, but they should also be challenging. There will always be people both weaker and stronger than you.

5. Learn to say no

For example, an acquaintance of yours would like you to see a movie with him tonight. You made social plans for tomorrow with your friends and tonight you were going to study and do laundry. You really are not interested. You want to say no, but you hate turning people down. Politely saying no should become a habit. Saying no frees up time for the things that are most important.

6. Learn to Prioritize

Prioritizing your responsibilities and engagements is very important. Some people do not know how to prioritize and become procrastinators. A "to do list" places items in order of importance. One method is the ABC list. This list is divided into three sections; a, b, or c. The items placed in the A section are those needed to be done that day. The items placed in the B section need completion within the week. The C section items are those things that need to be done within the month. As the B, C items become more pertinent they are bumped up to the A or B list. Try it or come up with your own method, but do it.

7. Combine several activities

Another suggestion is to combine several activities into one time spot. While commuting to school, listen to taped notes. This allows up to an hour or two a day of good study review. While showering make a mental list of the things that need to be done. When you watch a sit-com, laugh as you pay your bills. These are just suggestions of what you can do to combine your time, but there are many others, above all be creative, and let it work for you.

8. Conclusion

After scheduling becomes a habit, then you can adjust it. It's better to be precise at first. It is easier to find something to do with extra time than to find extra time to do something. Most importantly, make it work for you. A time schedule that is not personalized and honest is not a time schedule at all.

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<http://www.academictips.org/acad/timemanagement.html>