

What is Time Management?

Working Smarter to Enhance Productivity

Successfully managing your time is the process of organizing and planning how to divide your time between specific activities. This enables you to work smarter – not harder – so that you get more done in less time, even when time is tight and pressures are high.

Failing to manage your time damages your effectiveness and causes stress.

Reasons to improve your time management include:

- Greater productivity and efficiency.
- A better professional reputation.
- Less stress.
- Increased opportunities for advancement.
- Greater opportunities to achieve important life and career goals.

Failing to manage your time effectively can have some very undesirable consequences:

- Missed deadlines.
- Inefficient work flow.
- Poor work quality.
- Higher stress levels.

It's important to learn this now, as it's also necessary in your future career and workplace

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Contact details

South Campus: 041-5042511
North Campus: 041-5043222
Missionvale Campus: 041-5041106
Second Avenue Campus: 041-5043854
George Campus:

In case of an emergency:

- NMMU Protection Services: 041-504 2009/3483
- Suicide Emergency Line: 0800 567 567 or SMS 31393
- Life Line: 0861 322 322 (Counselling available 24/7)
- SA Anxiety Group 24-hour helpline: 0800 12 13 14

Note: Student Counselling services are confidential, free of charge to registered Mandela students, and offered by qualified counsellors and psychologists.

Student Counselling, Career and Development Centre
<http://counselling.mandela.ac.za>

email – counselling@mandela.ac.za



mandela.ac.za

Managing Your Time

TIPS TO HELP YOU MANAGE YOUR TIME EFFECTIVELY

1. Study difficult or boring subjects first.

This will prevent you from spending too much time on your 'favourite' subjects.

2. Avoid scheduling marathon study sessions.

For example, two 3-hour sessions are far more productive for most people than one long 6-hour session. When you are engaged in study over a relatively long period, take a break after every 40 minutes to 60 minutes. If you are studying in a large block of time, work on several different subjects and avoid studying similar subjects back-to-back. This will help you to avoid confusion.

3. Leave some unscheduled time for flexibility and for recreational activities

Lack of flexibility is the major reason why study time-tables fail. When planning your schedule, begin by listing the activities that come at fixed hours and that cannot be changed. Next schedule flexible time commitments. These hours can be swapped with other blocks of time if your schedule needs to be changed during the week.

4. Be aware of your best time of day.

Observe yourself and schedule study time for your most demanding studies at times when you are most alert and wide awake

5. Make good use of free hours during the university day.

Have short study tasks to do for e.g. when waiting for transport, during free periods between lectures.

6. Don't get too comfortable.

Avoid studying in bed. Easy chairs and sofas are dangerous places to study. Your body gets the wrong signal such as: "time to relax/sleep".

HANDLING TIME-WASTERS AND INTERRUPTIONS

Time wasters and interruptions can make it difficult for you to implement your best plans and intentions to study. Safeguarding blocks of study time is essential. You need to protect your time by saying 'no' to various interruptions, activities, requests or persons. Some interruptions can be avoided by keeping in mind the following:

1. Make agreements with live-in mates about study time.

Set clear rules - even written contracts. Be sure to follow them yourself!

2. Avoid noise and visual distractions.

Some students have reported good results with carefully selected and controlled music, but most research indicates that silence is preferable.

3. Notice how others misuse your time.

Ask yourself if there are certain people who consistently interrupt your study time. Be assertive. Firmly request that others respect your study times.

4. Put your phone away

Use a simple 'I can't talk now, I'm studying'. Return telephone calls when it's more convenient for you. Other alternatives are to simply unplug the landline or turn off your cell-phone or study in the library or study centre where you can't receive calls.

5. Learn to say no.

You are not required to agree to all requests. Saying no can be done politely and firmly, e.g. to an invitation to out during your scheduled study time.

6. Close your door.

Open it selectively. A "DO NOT DISTURB" sign can be helpful.

MORE TIPS MANAGING YOUR TIME

Creating to-do lists

Listing and prioritizing three to five tasks that enables you to identify and visualize a core group of tasks for easy reference

Avoiding procrastination

Is your procrastination related to a project? Or is it a habit?

Developing self-discipline

Self-discipline can be considered a type of selective training, creating new habits of thought, action, and speech toward improving yourself and reaching goals.

QUESTION'S YOU CAN ASK YOURSELF IN ORDER TO AVOID WASTING TIME

What is the one task I can accomplish toward my goal?

Pick one small accomplishment that you can complete in \pm 5 minutes

Am I being perfectionistic?

If you can complete a job 95% perfect in two hours and 100% perfect in four hours, ask yourself whether the additional 5% improvement is worth doubling the amount of time you spend.

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