

TIME MANAGEMENT

Time management is an essential skill for successful study. It is a matter of choice how you use the time you have. Effective time management is about using time efficiently, making good decisions about what and how you study.

Time management skills

1. Goal setting – knowing what you are trying to achieve. This helps you to stay motivated and manage your time more effectively. To set goals, you need to decide on your:

- long-term goals
- medium-term goals
- short-term goals.

2. Prioritising – getting the most done in the most efficient and effective way. Time is limited and valuable, so it must be allocated wisely: focus on what you plan to do.

3. Planning your time. This means thinking ahead and taking control of your time. Planning regularly allows you to achieve your goals, monitor your progress, and prevent time wastage.

Seven tips for time management

1. Set goals that are SMART:
 - **S**pecific (what exactly you will do in this particular time)
 - **M**easurable (can be checked and measured)
 - **A**ttainable (can be achieved in the time allowed)
 - **R**ealistic (what you are willing and able to do)
 - **T**imely (you really need to do it now).
2. When planning, **divide large blocks of time** into manageable units. For example, 30 minutes can be divided into:
 - 3 minutes: decide what to do
 - 25 minutes: do it
 - 2 minutes: review it

Do this twice, and then have a break.
3. **Plan** exactly how the time will be used.
4. **Learn to prioritise**; do the most important and urgent tasks first.
5. **Finish what you start.**
6. **Use 'wasted time'**, e.g. read a chapter while on the bus or train; ring your mum.
7. **Reward yourself!**

Conquering procrastination

There are three types of procrastinator: the thrill-seeker (respond to deadline pressure), the avoider (worried about consequences of success or failure) and the decisional procrastinator (worried about responsibility, so can't make a decision).

Here are some ways of overcoming procrastination.

- Set a clear goal for the first task.
- Plan your time and stick to it.
- Eliminate distractions: turn off email tones, phone, SMS, etc.
- Break up difficult or 'dry' work into sections and tackle them one by one. Achieve small goals.
- Set deadlines for yourself that are not too restrictive. Aim for something, but be flexible.
- Minimise time-wasting activities, e.g. social networking sites, housework.
- Avoid being a perfectionist.

Limiting interruptions

A few useful strategies (rules!) can help you to minimise the effect of interruptions on your study.

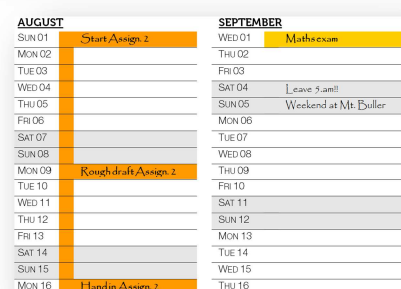
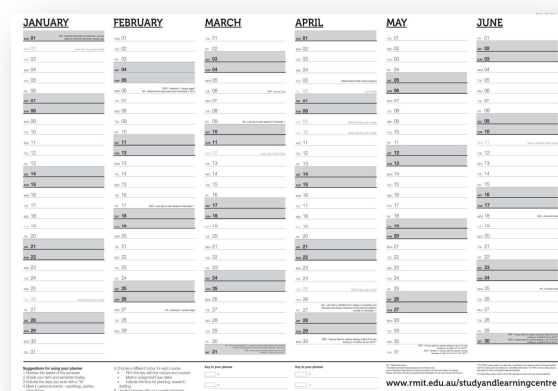
- Learn to say 'no' or 'not now, but maybe later'.
- Ignore the phone or let it go to messages. Put your mobile phone on silent. Turn off chat and social networking sites.
- Make sure you plan time for social activities and family life.
- Find a place to study where you are less likely to be interrupted. Leave the house! Go to the library to study.
- If you study at home, close the door. Put a friendly 'work in progress' sign on the door.
- If someone does interrupt you, stand up! People are less likely to hang around if you remain standing.
- Work out **how much time is available** and how you can **best use this time**. Use planners to help you plan your time.

PLANNING TOOLS

To organise your time successfully, you need to work out how much time is available and how you can best use this time. You need three kinds of planners: semester planner, weekly timetable, and daily to-do lists.

1. The semester planner

1. Collect a **semester planner** from the Study and Learning Centre.
2. Think about how to organise or code your planner before you begin.
3. Choose a colour for each subject. Use the key.
4. Fill in dates for:
 - assignment deadlines
 - exam times
 - special events: birthdays, weddings ...
 - holidays (time away? extra paid work? extra study time?)
 - work days
 - personal/ family commitments
 - assignment planning and drafting (rough plan, first draft, final draft); work backwards from deadlines to allow time for editing your work.



2. The weekly timetable

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
5-6							
6-7							
7-8							
8-9							
9-10							
10-11							
11-12							
12-1							
1-2							
2-3							
3-4							
4-5							
5-6							
6-7							
7-8							
8-9							
9-10							
10-11							
11-12							
12-1							

Collect a **weekly timetable** from the SLC or download it from RMIT Learning Lab.

- Put it where you can easily see it, e.g. glue it in your diary.
- Enter lecture and tutorial times.
- Colour work commitments.
- Review your timetable regularly; it may need adjustment.
- Have a clear goal for every study session.
- Reward yourself – it helps you to stay focused.

3. The daily to-do list

1. Make a daily to-do list in your student diary or e-organisier.
2. List all the things to do that day, including your study goals.
3. Carry the list with you.
4. Tick or cross things off as you complete them.
5. Put anything not completed on the next day's to-do list.

