

TIME MANAGEMENT

The university experience involves managing a great variety of information, activities, processes, relationships, and other demands on your time and energy. Everyone has different ways of approaching time management, and this handout is a basic introduction to some of these ways.

RESPECT YOUR OWN LEARNING STYLES

More important than any trick or technique, perhaps, is beginning to understand your own abilities and challenges in learning and living. For example, some people enjoy routine, while others prefer change. Some people read quickly, others slowly. Some people process information visually, others in words.

These examples are just a hint at how different our learning and living styles can be. Getting to know your own style is an important part of becoming more comfortable with how you manage time. Here are a few ways to better understand your needs and learning style:

- Try working at different times of day, in different kinds of spaces, and in different kinds of ways. What works and what doesn't?
- Keep a journal dedicated to your working methods. Whenever you notice that one approach is going well or another is posing challenges, jot down a few notes about it. Review occasionally and learn from your experience.
- Talk with friends and colleagues about their habits and approaches. Maybe the student sitting next to you has a great idea you have never tried before.
- Get support from OCAD U. Consider talking with someone at the Writing & Learning Centre or the Student Health & Wellness Centre.
- Ask about our "How You Learn" booklet to take a closer look at your own learning strengths and challenges.

PUTTING IT IN PRACTICE

Now let's move on to a few practical tips.

USE A PLANNER: There are all kinds of paper and electronic planners available - find one you're comfortable using and that allows you the level of planning you need. If you're the sort of person who likes reminders, try one of the many digital solutions on your computer, smartphone, or e-mail account. If you prefer old-fashioned notebooks, check out OCADSU's student agenda. Whatever type of calendar you choose, use it to plan as much as possible:

- lectures
- tutorials
- studios
- meetings and appointments
- due dates for all assignments
- stages of assignments - note when each stage should begin and end (i.e. brainstorming, researching, refining, outlining, revising, purchasing materials, etc.).

MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR PLANNER: Each week make a rough list of things you need and/or want to achieve. Recopy this list in order of importance. Decide on priorities based not only on due dates and grade percentages, but also on what inspires you, what gives you energy. (Taking time to make some work you really want to make might give you the boost you need to accomplish something else you've been avoiding.) Use your planner to:

- Schedule activities strategically: Keep fresh by organizing different kinds of work in one day
- Highlight top priorities using colour, stickers, alerts, etc.
- Check your planner every day for daily, weekly, and monthly concerns
- Cross off activities that are complete – it's a satisfying feeling!

TAKE CARE: It's important to be keep up your physical and emotional health. Make sure your schedule allows you to:

- Take breaks – at least 10 or 15 minutes each 90 minutes or so (Recent research indicates that exposure to nature improves cognition – why not take a break in a garden or park?)
- Exercise, meditate, or let off steam – whatever that means to you
- Keep hydrated and get enough sleep
- Eat well

STAY FLEXIBLE: Planning is excellent, but we can't anticipate everything. Leave an hour or two of unplanned time in your day so that you can deal with unforeseen events, or activities that take longer than you expected.