

# Time Management: 15 Ways to Get the Most Out of Now

These tips cover when to study, where to study, and how to handle the rest of the world. As you read, circle the suggestions you think you can use. *Pick two or three techniques to use now.* When they become habits and you do them automatically, return and pick a couple more.

## When to Study

1. Plan two hours of study time for every hour you spend in class. If you are taking 15 credit hours, plan to spend 30 hours per week studying. This will pay off at exam time!
2. Study difficult (or less interesting) subjects first. Most of us do what we like first, yet the courses we find most difficult often require the most energy. Save the best (or most interesting) for last!
3. Avoid scheduling marathon study sessions. When possible, study in shorter sessions. Three 3-hour sessions are far more productive than one nine-hour session. When you do study in long sessions, take a planned break every hour. If you must study in a large block, work on several subjects and avoid studying similar subjects back to back.
4. Be aware of your best time of day. Many people learn best during daylight hours. Observe yourself, and if this is true, schedule study time for your difficult subjects when the sun is up.
5. Use waiting time. Five minutes waiting for a bus, 20 minutes waiting for the dentist, 10 minutes between classes - waiting time adds up fast. Have short study tasks ready to do during these times.

## Where to Study

6. Use a regular study area. Your body knows where you are. When you use the same place to study, day after day, your body becomes trained. When you arrive at that particular place, it will automatically sense that it's time to study. You will focus your concentration more quickly.
7. Don't get too comfortable. In bed, your body gets a signal. For most students, the signal is: "time to sleep," rather than, "time to study!" Give your body a message that energy is needed by staying away from bed!
8. Use a library. Libraries are designed for learning. Entering a library is a signal to your body to get to work.

## How to Handle the Rest of the World

9. Pay attention to your attention. Breaks in concentration are often caused by internal interruptions; your thoughts jumping in to tell you another story. When that happens, notice the thoughts and let them go.
10. Agree with living mates about study time. This includes roommates, spouses, and kids. Make the rule clear, and be sure to follow them yourself. Make explicit agreements—maybe even written contracts.
11. Avoid noise distractions. Do not study in front of the TV. Turn off the stereo. The overwhelming majority of research indicates that silence is the best form of music for study.
12. Notice how others misuse your time. Ask yourself if certain friends or relatives consistently interrupt your study time. If avoiding the interrupter is impractical, send a clear message. A gentle reminder should do.
13. Get off the phone. You don't have to get stuck on the phone. A simple, "I can't talk, I'm studying" should work. Or, avoid the whole problem: you can't receive calls at the library if you don't have your phone!
14. Learn to say no. This timesaver is a valuable life skill. Others want you to succeed. When you tell them that you can't help with their request because you are busy educating yourself, most will understand.
15. Hang a "do not disturb" sign on your door. They work. Using one will relieve you of making a decision about cutting off each interruption—a timesaver in itself.