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## How to manage your time as a college student

CC BY SA-2.0/College Degrees 360/Flickr A college education can get really expensive, but there are ways to ensure you don't go broke getting brainy. Funding for college students can come from scholarship money and grants, for starters. But when you're looking for an opportunity to offset your college costs while meeting new people, a part-time job is a great solution. Work-Study JobsFederal work-study programs give undergraduate and graduate students with financial need opportunities to work part time to pay for their education.CC0/Miroslavik/Pixabay Resident AssistantFor students who have finished one year of college, resident assistant (or RA) positions enforce the policies and rules of your campus and dormitory. This scenario usually gives you room and board in exchange for your position.CC BY 2.0/Daniel Borman/Flickr Peer TutorStudents who excel in certain academic areas are well-suited to working at their college tutoring center. You'll help other students grasp difficult concepts and share helpful studying and note-taking techniques for future success.CC BY 2.0/college.library/Flickr Teaching or Research AssistantFor students who've developed a good relationship with a professor, research or teaching assistantships help you to learn more about your field. Teaching assistants grade papers, assist other students and help during busy office hours.CC BY 2.0/Austin Community College/Flickr Library AssistantLibrary assistants help other students and library visitors to check books in and out, use library resources and find the materials they need. They also track down overdue materials and become experts on often-overlooked library tools.CC BY 1.0/LBJ Library/Flickr Internships and Virtual GigsIf you don't qualify for a work-study position, The University Network is a valuable online resource connecting employers with students looking for part-time jobs, internships and virtual gigs. 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Clerks also pull books that students have ordered online and set them aside for pickup.CC BY SA-2.0/brewbooks/Flickr Fitness Center AssistantIf you're spending half your day at the gym already, you might as well look into working at the campus fitness center. You'll clean machines, checking in members and re-racking weights.CC BY 2.0/Port George Meade Public Affairs/Flickr MORE FROM QUESTIONSANSWERED.NET Time management is a perennial concern for any student. Add work, family and social activities in the mix, and these responsibilities become even more challenging. You're not alone in attempting to balance a chaotic schedule in earning your degree. According to a 2015 study conducted by Georgetown University, 40 percent of students ages 16-29 and 76 percent of students ages 30-54 years old work while in school.1 As you might imagine, if you're a student with competing priorities, it's incredibly important to focus on time management in college. So, what can you do to better manage your time? We've compiled some excellent advice that can help you keep on top of your studies. 11 Time management tips for college students Whether you're fresh out of high school or working two jobs while raising a family, these time management strategies and tips for college students will help keep you organized and your assignments on track. 1. Record all due dates and deadlines Say you're sitting in class ready to leave when the teacher makes an announcement. There's homework due in three days and an exam in one week. As you leave class, you make a mental note to remember those days. How often has that happened to you, only for you to panic the night before your homework is due because you forgot? Save yourself the late-night scramble and write everything down as you hear it. "Even if you think you'll remember a due date or something you have to do at work, write it down," says Rebecca Holley, a full-time student and marketing associate at Edvisors. Holley recommends going through course calendars and syllabi at the beginning of the semester and writing down all the important dates. Knowing what's coming up will help you better prepare. 2. Create a routine Getting into a routine can reduce uncertainty about when and how you will fit in homework and study time on top of school and work. Create a routine at the beginning of the semester so you can adjust to it early, and then see if you have leftover time for other engagements. Holley plans her day around work and school. "It's not always perfect—sometimes you might have to stay up late or miss out on something fun to keep up with homework—but that's just how it is," Holley says. "It won't last forever and crossing that finish line will make it so worth it." 3. Use your tech for good With millions of apps and games at your fingertips, your smartphone can seem like more of a time waster than a time manager. However, with some self-discipline, you can transform your phone or mobile device into an on-the-go calendar and scheduler. Set reminders to help you keep due dates and other important commitments in mind as you go through your day. Apps can be helpful too, with project management and productivity apps like Trello® serving as digital to-do lists. Tempted to check social media regularly during your study time? Try one of the many apps that block social media and other distractions. But don't stop with your phone. Your computer and tablet accounts can also be organized to minimize potential distractions. "Create three different users: one for personal use, one for work and one for school," advises David Bitton, chief marketing officer at DoorLoop. "On your work and school user accounts, have only the essentials you'll need to execute work and school-related tasks. Everything else relating to leisure and entertainment should be under your personal account. The fewer distractions you allow into your routine, the better you will manage your time." 4. Break down your workload with the Pomodoro® Technique If you find tech increasingly getting in your way however, peer tutor and Nursing student at Rasmussen University Kristin Irvin recommends trying the Pomodoro Technique. Invented by an Italian developer named Francesco Cirillo, this technique is named after the tomato-shaped kitchen timer Cirillo used to time his sessions (pomodoro is the Italian word for tomato). "The Pomodoro technique is like a high intensity-interval training (HIIT) workout," explains Irvine. "First, you choose the task you would like to work on, set a timer for 25 minutes and begin working on the selected task with no distractions. Once the timer goes off, set a timer for 5 minutes and take a break. Repeat these steps as many times as your like." Of course, you don't really need a tomato-shaped timer to stick to this approach—any device that counts down from 25 minutes will get the job done. Even better? For those who like to have music while studying, you can even find playlists that stick to the 25-minute time allotment. 5. Take note-taking to the next level Many of us take notes during lectures but leave it at that. Frank Buck, educational consultant at Frank Buck Consulting Inc, suggests students try thinking of their lecture notes as more of a rough outline or first draft. "During class, don't worry about neatness, form or spelling," says Buck. "The magic happens that evening when you interact with those notes for a second time within the same day." According to Buck, most forgetting happens within the first 24 hours of being introduced to new material. Re-copying and re-organizing those notes will increase your retention and understanding of new concepts. While doing this, you also pause to consider anything that didn't make sense during the original lecture. "Look it up in the textbook or perform a quick Google search to clear the confusion," Buck advises. "Double-check spelling as needed. This practice is like spinning straw into gold. When it's time to study for the test, the notes are pristine. The time required for study is lessened." 6. Examine and limit potential distractions Being realistic about your habits and preferences not only helps you establish a routine that works for you, but it can also help you when it comes to your distractions. "If you tend to work best at night, there's no use trying to get all your work done in the morning," says Mike Grossman, CEO of GoodHire.® Grossman suggests getting a clear sense of what activities you gravitate to when you don't feel like working, whether that's deep cleaning your study space, scrolling through social media or making plans with a friend who drops by. Changing your study location, putting your phone in another room or just closing the door can be the preventative measures you need to take to avoid wasting precious time. 7. Ask for help One bit of time management advice that is often overlooked is to ask for help, says Stephen Light, chief marketing officer of Nolah Mattress. "Immediately contact a professor if you don't understand something," Light advises. "Some feel awkward or embarrassed about asking questions, but it'll be worth it down the line. If you're struggling to understand a concept or lesson and don't ask for help, you could waste valuable hours trying to figure it out for yourself." If you're feeling like your coursework covers concepts you already understand, it's a good idea to check if the program you're in offers competency-based education courses that can provide additional flexibility on where you spend your time in a course. But time management means nothing if you're physically, emotionally and psychologically drained. Recognizing when you're overwhelmed and asking for help will serve you better in the long run. This may mean dropping an activity or reducing your credit load. Many schools also offer tutoring and other kinds of student support, so checking into any of those resources available to you is a must. 8. Keep yourself healthy This may not seem obvious but looking after your health can actually play a huge role in successfully managing your time while in college. Practicing regular exercise can keep your energy levels up, resulting in a more engaged mind when doing schoolwork. Many also assert that getting adequate sleep at night can save college students time—this not only helps you avoid the time taken for afternoon naps, but it also can increase your alertness and decrease your stress levels. 9. Stay organized Keeping your schoolwork organized can be a huge factor in saving you some time throughout the week, especially if you're taking more than one class at a time. If you have separate binders, notebooks and folders for each class, you'll quickly be able to find that sheet of notes for next week's test or the article you planned to reference for your big research paper. Avoiding clutter isn't just important when organizing your notes and hand-outs. Be sure to keep your computer desktop organized in a way that always allows you to locate the files you'll need for each particular class. 10. Checklists are your friend Printing or writing out checklists for each class or each day of the week can be a helpful way of remembering everything you need to get done. Try color-coordinating tasks by importance or subject (such as school or work) to help you better visualize what needs to get done. "Make a checklist of all the major homework tasks for the day or week," says Vasiliki Baskos, teacher and founder of Learn Greek Online. "Prioritize them so that in case you run out of time, the less-important tasks will remain unfinished." 11. Find a balance Life's stress happens to everyone. Being in school is no exception. Work gets hectic, family obligations increase and social activities become unruly. In times like those, it's good to step back and take a deep breath. "Ask your family and friends to support you during these challenging times of juggling work and school, but also give them permission to confront you if they think you're driving yourself—and them—crazy at times," says Anita Thomas, senior vice president at Edvisors. Giving yourself time to recharge is also an essential part of effective time management. "Many people forget to make time for themselves, and this is a big mistake," says Cathy Mills, director at Net Influencer. Mills says that this time need not be lengthy—15 or 30 minutes a day—but it should involve doing activities you enjoy: exercising, watching an episode of a favorite TV show, listening to music, taking a walk. "These activities that you enjoy will be a great motivation," Mills adds. "You will see that you will be much more productive and manage your time better." Put these college time management strategies to use Take the advice of experts and students who have been there. See if you can calm that chaotic schedule for a stress-free college degree. Of course, it'll take more than just solid time management skills to succeed in college. Our article "How to Get Ahead in College: 5 Tips for Success" highlights some of the other things you should do to stay on track for success. 1Anthony P. Carnevale, Nicole Smith and Michelle Melton, "Learning While Earning: The New Normal" Georgetown University, Center on Education and the Workforce [Information accessed December 2021] EDITOR'S NOTE: This article was originally published in 2014 and has since been updated to include information relevant to 2022. Trello is a registered trademark of Trello, Inc. Pomodoro technique is a registered trademark of Francesco Cirillo. GoodHire is a registered trademark of Inflection, LLC.



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