

**TOPIC**

# *Time Management*

Helping students **PREPARE, ADVANCE** and **EXCEL.**

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Time management . . . . . 1  
Taking aim at your goals . . . . . 1  
Understanding how your  
time is spent . . . . . 2  
How am I choosing to  
spend my time? . . . . . 3  
Time management cycle . . . . . 4  
Time management  
tools and tips . . . . . 5  
Procrastination and fear  
of failure . . . . . 6

**CAMPUSES**

**Flanagan**, Room 3620  
(above cafeteria)  
401-333-7440

**Knight**, Room 3540  
(third floor; library)  
401-825-1170

**Liston**, Room 2236  
(second floor; next to library)  
401-455-6116

**Newport**, Room 251 & 252  
(within library)  
401-851-1701

## Time management

Scheduling and managing time wisely are important for college students. Successful time management can assist you in keeping important personal and academic appointments and deadlines. If you have difficulty “finding time” to accomplish your daily tasks and academic requirements you may experience anxiety, frustration, guilt and other self-defeating feelings.

This handout is designed to make you more aware of how you use your time, how you choose and set your priorities and goals, and time management tools that you can incorporate into your lifestyle to improve your time management skills. Many students are resistant to using resources and tools to help them manage their schedules, deadlines and commitments, but these tips can save you time, reduce anxiety and enhance how you use your time.

goals. It makes sense, then, that to manage time at all, you will need to choose specific goals.

Write down your goals, including: long-range goals concerning your degree, career and life; goals for the immediate school year; and short-term goals according to your individual courses and daily commitments. Keep your goals handy so you can make decisions that will help you attain your goals and stay motivated.

## Taking aim at your goals

Many students attending CCRI set a goal of earning a degree, a certificate or enough credits to transfer to another college. Most CCRI students have multiple responsibilities between home, work and school. Successful time management is all about finding ways to complete the tasks associated with your



## Understanding where your time is spent

To begin managing your time, you first need a clearer idea of how you now use your time. The assessment below will help you estimate how much time you spend in typical activities. To get a more accurate estimate, your Student Success Center coordinator may ask you to track how you spend your time for a week using a companion time log form.

This activity will allow you to:

- Determine how you spend your time
- Allow you to set aside specific time for class, study, work, family and social activities
- Identify activities wasting your time
- Identify new areas of your schedule for activities related to your goals and priorities

Earning a degree is a serious commitment of time and involves sacrifice on your part. To be successful, students should realize that a great deal of time is necessary to prepare for and attend college classes. How you choose to spend your time will directly affect your success in achieving the goals you have set yourself. Having clear goals will assist you in maintaining your motivation for obtaining your degree.

### TIME LOG

Directions: Estimate the amount of time spent on each item and multiply this number by seven to give you a weekly amount of time for this activity. Add all the totals in the far right column. Subtract this number from 168, (*the total number hours per week*).

| THINGS I DO ( <i>number of hours for each activity</i> )                | Required Time | Total |
|---|---------------|-------|
| 1. Average amount of sleep each night                                   | X 7           |       |
| 2. Grooming hours per day   | X 7           |       |
| 3. Preparing and eating meals   | X 7           |       |
| 4. Total travel time ( <i>work, school, weekends</i> )                  | X 7           |       |
| 5. Hours per day for chores, errands, family, etc.                      | X 7           |       |
| 6. Regularly scheduled function ( <i>clubs, church, etc.</i> ) per week |               |       |
| 7. Hours of work per week   |               |       |
| 8. Hours in class per week  |               |       |
| 9. Hours spent studying and/or homework per week                        |               |       |
| 10. Average hours per week socializing. Be honest!                      |               |       |
| <b>SUBTOTAL</b>   |               |       |
| <b>TOTAL HOURS</b> possible per week                                    | 168           |       |
| <i>Subtract the subtotal from 168</i>                                   |               | =     |

## How am I choosing to spend my time?

The significance of importance and urgency in choosing your actions is illustrated in Quadrant II of the **Time Management System**® chart. The chart shows that actions fall into one of four quadrants, depending on their importance and urgency.

### Understanding the Quadrants

**Quadrant I** actions are important activities done under the pressure of deadlines. People who spend their lives in this quad are constantly putting out brush fires in their lives. They frantically create modest achievements in the present while sacrificing extraordinary success in the future. Quad I is the quadrant in which people experience stress, develop ulcers, and other stress-related health problems.

**Quadrant II** actions are activities done without the pressure of looming deadlines. When you engage in an important activity with time enough to do it well, you can achieve your goals. If you use time

management tools such as making to-do lists, setting goals, and prioritizing goals and activities, you can achieve your goals.

**Quadrant III** activities are unimportant activities done with a sense of urgency. How often have you answered your phone only to be trapped in long, unwanted conversations? Or have you agreed to do something only because you can't bring yourself to say no? Anytime we allow someone else's urgency to talk us into an activity unimportant to our own goals we have chosen to be in Quad III.

**Quadrant IV** activities are simply time-wasters. Everyone wastes some time, so don't be overly harsh on yourself for straying into this quadrant once in a while. But do become more aware of your choice of activities and minimize wasting time.

### TIP:

If obtaining a certificate or degree is your goal, making time for studying and home work should be your top priority.

### QUADRANT II TIME MANAGEMENT SYSTEM®

|               | Urgent   | Not Urgent   |
|---------------|--|--|
| Important     | <b>Quadrant I</b><br><i>Example:</i><br>Staying up all night cramming for an 8 a.m. test.                            | <b>Quadrant II</b><br><i>Example:</i><br>Creating a study group in the first week of the semester. |
| Not Important | <b>Quadrant III</b><br><i>Example:</i><br>Attending a hastily called meeting that has nothing to do with your goals. | <b>Quadrant IV</b><br><i>Example:</i><br>Mindlessly surfing the Web until 4 a.m.                   |

## The time management cycle

Now that you have an estimate of how you spend your time, the next step in managing your time is to adopt a time management system such as the cyclical system (see below) early in the academic year.

Usually the system begins with the process of goal setting to establish a context for managing time. The next phase of the system involves tracking time and developing awareness for where you spend your time. The third phase of the cycle is making a plan that could include making to-do lists, weekly plans, monthly plans and longer-range plans. The fourth phase of the system is self-monitoring your action.

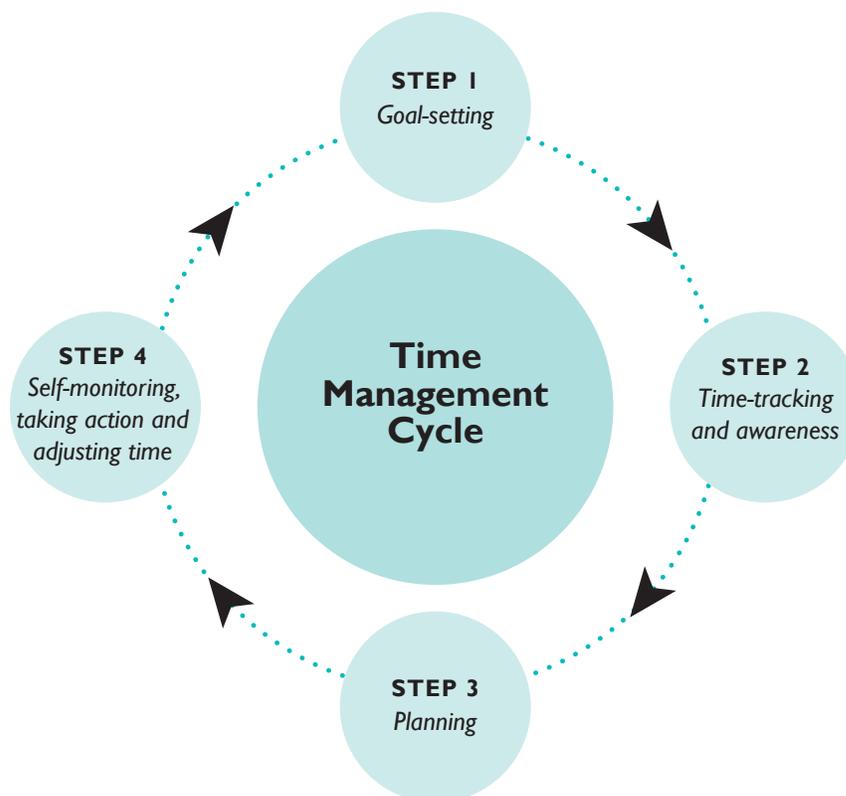
Self-monitoring involves paying attention to how well you are working your plan, how accurately you have planned, how well you have forecasted

for various events and so on. The final phase of the cycle is time-shifting and adjusting (*i.e.*, *changing where you spend your time to better match your intended use of time*) by making corrections to the system before starting the cycle again at goal setting.

Together these phases allow you to begin improving your time management skills. Everybody wants the “quick fix,” but it will take some time to get a grip on your time management process.

### CYCLICAL SYSTEM OF TIME MANAGEMENT

Become aware of your time usage and goals and shift or adjust your schedule as necessary:



#### TIP:

Don't be afraid to admit you under or over estimated the time you set aside for a task; just be sure to be open to changing your schedule if necessary.

## Time management tools and tips

### Calendars and to-do lists

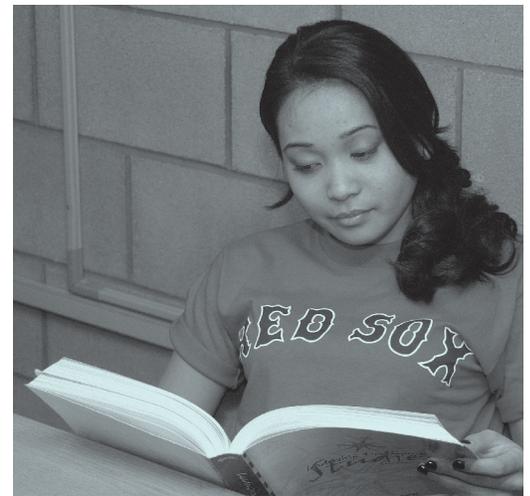
1. Use a calendar – electronic, online or paper.  
Your MyCCRI account gives you access to an online calendar. Whatever formats you choose, use it. Look at your calendar daily.
2. Plan your day each morning or the night before, and set priorities for yourself.
3. Look ahead in your month. Try to anticipate what is going to happen, so you can better schedule your time.
4. The first week of school, use your class syllabi to put due dates for assignments, test dates, and appointments for the entire semester in your calendar. Put reminders on your calendar three to four days prior to the due date.
5. Don't over-schedule yourself. Build extra time into your weekly schedule prior to appointment or assignments as a buffer in case an unknown emergency arises.
6. Maintain and develop a list of specific tasks to be done each day; set your priorities and get the most important ones done as soon in the day as you can. Evaluate your progress at the end of the day.
7. Employ the ABC prioritizing method for your to-do list tasks – high (A), medium (B) and low priority (C) – to your activities, so you don't waste time doing low priority tasks.
8. When quality study time is needed, reduce distractions; turn off the phone and e-mail, shut your door or find a quiet study spot to avoid any distractions.
9. Schedule time for yourself. Get six to eight hours of sleep per day and have fun as well.

#### TIP:

The best time managers structure their time by doing certain activities each week at the same time. By doing this, studying can be part of your routine.

### Maximize your time

1. Continually look at ways of freeing up your time.
2. Delegate responsibilities whenever possible.
3. Consider your natural biological rhythm when planning your day's activities; if you are not a morning person, don't schedule important meetings or classes early in the day.
4. Try to use waiting time (e.g., at a doctor's office or mechanic) to accomplish another task such as reviewing notes or doing practice problems.



### Set goals and create a plan to accomplish your goals

1. Think on paper when possible; it makes it easier to revise your goals.
2. Put up reminders in your home or office about your goals to keep them in mind.
3. Set deadlines for your goals and check in with your goals and calendar frequently to make sure you are still on track. Modify your goals or schedule as necessary.
4. Reward yourself when you get things done as you had planned.

## Procrastination and fear of failure

### Understand procrastination

Everybody procrastinates at one time or another, for one reason or another. The trick is knowing what you procrastinate over, as well as when, how, and why. What do you procrastinate over the most? What is your favorite mode of procrastination? (e.g., TV, Internet, e-mail, housekeeping, etc.) Some things are easily put off because of their general insignificance or low relative value. Others are put off because of your own uncertainty about what to do or how to do it. Some are put off because they're extremely important or particularly difficult.

Check your motivation. When you catch yourself procrastinating:

1. Ask yourself, "What am I avoiding?"
2. Start with the most difficult parts of projects, then either the worst is done or you may find you don't have to do all the other small tasks.
3. Catch yourself when you are involved in unproductive projects, and stop as soon as you can.
4. Find time to concentrate on high-priority items or activities.
5. Concentrate on one thing at a time.



### Fear of failure

Some people procrastinate because of their fear of failure of an important or difficult task. Others procrastinate because they fear success because success leads to more demands. Some people resent authority and resist compliance out of hostility. Some people are perfectionists and refuse to try if they are not guaranteed a perfect outcome. Some have low frustration tolerance and don't want to be bothered. And, finally, some people are just depressed; they have little energy for anybody or anything. Do any of these statements sound like you?

Irrational "self-talk" – that critical voice in your head – exaggerates stress, increases or decreases motivation, increases or decreases action, disrupts attention/concentration, decreases effectiveness and ultimately provides an excuse for poor performance. What are you telling yourself? Does it motivate you or just make you anxious? Replace irrational self-talk with positive and realistic statements about yourself.

### Make time for your success

Attention to details of time and task management can pay off in reduced anxiety, increased productivity and more satisfaction in all aspects of your life. Remember, time management doesn't mean working to fill in time. It means completing tasks and having time for other activities. In the long run, effective time management leads to less fatigue and better health, both physically and mentally, and, most importantly, to attainment of your goals.

#### TIP:

Being able to admit you don't know how to do an assignment and asking for help will reduce the amount of time you procrastinate.