Time Management

Overview

The key factor in effective time management is being organized. Being organized means keeping your goals in mind and planning your activities to make them a reality. Prioritizing your responsibilities and taking a hard look at what you NEED to do vs. what you WANT to do can help you manage your time better as well.

Planning and Preparation

Careful planning and preparation will help you find success during your college career and beyond into your professional career! Careful planning comes before doing any activity. When you plan ahead, you are considering questions such as:

1. What do you have to do?
2. What resources do you require to get the job done? For example, time, money, people, accessories, or information.
3. Can you break down the activity into smaller, more manageable tasks?

Basic Time Management Strategies

Sometimes keeping your goals in mind and planning your activities accordingly are not enough. Many times, we will come across unexpected circumstances that can interfere with our plans and goals. The ability to stay flexible is also very important.

Effective time managers are capable of doing the following:

- **Dealing with the demands of others.** You may be able to avoid some interruptions from friends, family, colleagues, or classmates, but realize that the people you live with deserve your time and attention too. Schedule time for fun and relaxation with family into each day to avoid burnout.
- **Learn how to say "NO."** Say no to additional projects, responsibilities, and demands when you are already over committed. Your willingness to say no will help you realize your full potential and achieve your goals.
- **Use unexpected gifts of time.** Use your time waiting at the doctor’s office or on your hour-long commute to work wisely. You would be surprised how much you can read and do in only 10 minutes.

Tools for Managing Time

There are many time management tools that can help you prioritize your goals, and schedule your time wisely so you can maximize the time you have available doing those tasks that are most
important to you. Some of these tools are pocket calendars, weekly planners, diaries, personal digital assistants (PDAs), and computer-based calendars. They can help you plan for intermediate and long term activities.

In addition to maintaining a planner, making "To-Do" lists can help you organize your activities for the day. Prepare your "To-Do" list each morning, listing all the activities you wish to complete during the day, and cross each one off as you complete it. Completing everything you planned out to do for the day can provide a great sense of accomplishment.

Read the MindTools article and watch the video, To-Do Lists: The Key to Efficiency, to learn about the importance of making a "To-Do" list and how to make one. Be sure to take notes.