

Time Management/Organization

The big picture

Start by getting a planner and a wall or desk calendar. Keep in mind that you are more likely to retain information when you write it down which is an additional advantage to having a tactile object to write on. Commit to a plan, at the end of each class update your planner, and as soon as you have down time check your planner to refresh your memory. When you get back to your room update your large calendar with big things like tests, project due dates, etc.

Set goals

Look at the week and month ahead and see what is due when. Knowing this, you can set in-process goals for yourself. It is good to avoid looking at things only as "final" deadlines; rather, have a setup that includes in-process expectations for yourself.

The small picture

I suggest a planner that has plenty of room for notes, so that you can keep track of the big stuff (like home-work due dates) as well as smaller things (like daily goals and needs).

Find out where you are losing time

Cell phone use is typically a large offender. Iphone now has a built-in app that provides weekly screen time reports and allows you to set limits on app use and schedule downtime. This can help put into perspective just how much time you spend on your device.

Sometimes the phone is your friend

Use Siri to your advantage. Say, "Hey Siri, remind me tomorrow at 9 a.m. to print out my essay." While a paper planner is a good first line of defense, having timed reminders is a great way to keep you on point.

Find your "prime time"

Some of us are morning people (lucky), while others are better mid-day or at night. Consider when you can get into your best flow. Designate this time as your official work time.

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Find your best workspace

Once you have a set work time, set a space that is designated to your studies, and try to find a place with few distractions. After you set a location(s), make visiting this place part of your schedule. Perhaps after class on Wednesdays you always go there, or maybe in the morning on Tuesdays. Pick one or two small goals and stick to them.

Take proactive steps

Make your to-do list at night before you go to bed. Turn off the social media alerts. Use the “I’m driving” feature on your phone. You can customize the message, set your phone to drive, and create an “I’m studying, can’t talk right now” response.

Spend your mornings on MITS

MITs are your most important tasks. Ok, so I am stealing this directly from entrepreneurs.com, but I like it. Mark Twain said, “If it’s your job to eat a frog, it’s best to do it first thing in the morning. And if it’s your job to eat two frogs, it’s best to eat the biggest one first.” In short – do the hard stuff first and get it out of the way. You will feel like you have accomplished something.

Break it down

Try to break big assignments into pieces and groups. It can be easier to tackle when you are looking at a small piece of something than the project in its totality. Set in-process goals to help you tackle big-picture items.

Remember:

It is not about not having time; it is about identifying what are priorities, and making time for them. Check out this TED Talk with Laura Vanderkam on using your free time wisely: https://www.ted.com/talks/laura_vanderkam_how_to_gain_control_of_your_free_time#t-14975