

Guidelines for Creating a Study Schedule

Plan a schedule of balanced activities. College life has many aspects, which are very important to success. Some have fixed time requirements and others are flexible. Some of the most common which you must consider are:

Fixed: eating, organization, classes, work, spirituality

Flexible: sleeping, recreation, study, relaxation, socializing

Study at a regular time and in a regular place. Establishing habits of study is extremely important. Knowing what you are going to study and when saves a lot of time in making decisions and retracking your steps to get necessary materials, etc. Avoid generalizations in your schedule such as “study”. Commit yourself more definitely to “study history” or “study chemistry” at certain regular hours.

Study as soon as after lecture as possible. One hour spent soon after class will do as much as several hours a few days later. Review lecture notes while they are still fresh in your mind. Start assignments while your memory of the assignment is still accurate.

Use odd hours during the day for studying. Scattered 1-2 hour free periods between classes are easily wasted. Planning and establishing habits of using them for studying for the class just finished will result in free time for recreation at other times of the week.

Limit your blocks of study time to no more than 2 hours on any one course at a time. After 1 ½ to 2 hours of study you begin to tire rapidly and your ability to concentrate decreases rapidly. Taking a break and then studying another course will provide the change necessary to keep up your efficiency.

Provide for spaced review. That is, a regular weekly period when you will review the work in each of your courses and be sure that you are up to date. This review should be cumulative, covering briefly all the work done thus far in this semester.

List according to priorities. By putting first things first, you are sure to get the most important things done on time.

Eat well-balanced meals and get regular exercise. Take time for good meals and exercise. Healthy eating and exercise can dramatically improve your concentration, mood, and increase your energy level.

Double your time estimates. Most people tend to underestimate how much time a particular activity/assignment will take. A good rule of thumb is to estimate how much time you realistically think something will take and then double it. More often than not, this doubled estimate is accurate.