

EFFECTIVE TIME MANAGEMENT

One of the challenges of studying at university is managing your time. There are, however, many things you can do to ensure you use your time effectively.

Plan and schedule your time

Plan the semester

Consult your unit outlines for due dates of all your assignments and record them in a semester calendar or planner. Make a note of any particularly busy periods.

Plan your week

Use a digital or hardcopy weekly planner to allocate your time during each week.

Importantly, your weekly planner should schedule in:

- All of your **classes** e.g. lectures, labs, tutorials.
- **All other activities** including family time, social commitments, hobbies/sports, medical appointments etc.
- **Independent study time** where you will work on assignments, do readings, and study for tests/exams.

Work backwards from assignment due dates. For example, plan when you will:

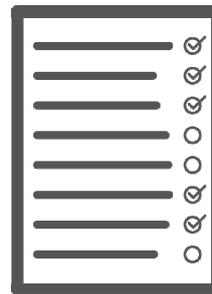
- Finish your initial research.
- Complete the outline for your essay, report, etc.
- Finish your 1st and 2nd drafts.

TIP

Check out the *STUDYSmarter* Assignment Date Calculator to help you break down your assignment into specific tasks.

Plan your day

Aim to have a **specific set of tasks or goals for each day** rather than just a vague idea that you will study.



Daily and weekly to-do lists are useful because they help to relieve some of the mental load of remembering everything you need to do.

Make sure you break your to-do list items down into small, manageable tasks. If the goal is specific and has a clear end point, then you can tick it off when it's finished.

TIP: When writing to-do lists, **make the goals specific.**

Vague goal: Work on report ✘

Specific goal: Read and annotate two readings for report ✓

Prioritise

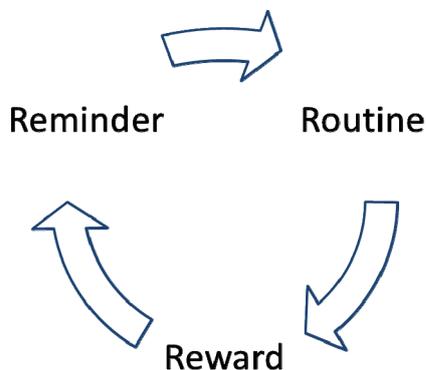
Your to-do list should be relevant and prioritised. Try sorting your tasks into low, medium and high priority.

Create study routines

It's all well and good to make plans but carrying them out is the hard part. One way to make sure you follow through is to turn your study plans into routines – automatic behaviours. You can do this by using reminders and rewards.

Reminder: Have a consistent cue for your study session. Try to study at the same place and time each week. E.g. "After I attend my PSYC1101 lecture on Wednesdays, I'll head to the Reid Library to study." You could also try setting reminders on your phone.

Reward: Rewarding yourself helps to cement behaviours. For example, after your study session you might like to treat yourself to a coffee, catch up with a friend or go for a walk along the river.



Staying motivated

- Eliminate digital distractions: try closing down irrelevant web browsers while you study. It's best to leave your phone in a different room while you study – even its mere presence on the table next to you can be distracting.
- Try the Pomodoro technique: work in short distraction-free blocks of time and take regular breaks (e.g. 25 mins of focused study, 5 minute break, then repeat the process.)
- Have a clear end goal for each study session. Write it down at the top of the page when you sit down to study.

TIP: Find a balance

Striking a healthy balance between study and leisure will help you to avoid burnout. Make time for things like exercising, socialising and relaxing. See our survival guide on managing stress for more tips.

Importantly, be flexible. Your planning tools should help you to accomplish your goals rather than make you feel more stressed out. If you find yourself setting unrealistic goals then be open to changing them.

Sometimes plans will need to be changed because important life events come up. That's OK!

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Avoiding procrastination, Managing stress, The Right Study Load For Me, Studying and ADHD.

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Any suggestions?

We would love to hear from you. Email us at studysmarter@uwa.edu.au

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