

# Time Management: *Family, Work and Study*

Just the thought of juggling work and study can be daunting but if you want to change career, missed out on the opportunity to study after high school, or just want to satisfy a hunger to learn, it is possible to fit your course around the other demands of your life such as having a family and a full time job.

First, forget 'balance'. The idea that it is possible to achieve this almost mystical state seems to do more harm than good. Sometimes you just can't have it all and compromises and sacrifices have to be made in order to get through. Hobbies can be put on the back burner for a while and other interests and goals will inevitably have to become less important for a while.

Second, effective students go for a combination of little and often - intense periods of work in order to meet the demands of the course. A lot of courses require you to deal with complex and novel ideas that need mulling over before they start to make sense. Those light bulb moments, in the shower or on the train, when something suddenly starts to make sense only happen if you keep plugging away. Setting aside even very short periods of, 15 minutes every day to at least think about the course, start planning an assignment or do some reading, can be productive.

Third, successful students seem to be excellent at working out what support is available, when it is available, and using it. You should be aware of all the resources available to you on campus and online. This includes everything from the Library, to a variety of student services. It can also be beneficial to make contact with your faculty outside class times. Talk with your lecture about topics that maybe you didn't understand or network with other students. These are effective ways of heightening your educational value.

## Managing Life, Work and Study Challenges

- Time management and scheduling your busy life, can help you plan and manage your daily life which will help you gain time and reduce stress. Remember to not only make these schedules realistic, but you also need to put an adequate amount of effort into following them.
- Make a quarterly schedule with all of your exams and assignments listed. This can help when your family is planning other activities or weekend holidays.
- Plan ahead at work. If you are working full time, apply for study leave in advance to coincide with study deadlines. This will ease the pressure during the more challenges times each semester.
- Weekly schedules and to-do lists are useful in scheduling appointments, writing in when your children have extra curricular activities, when your classes are and important family time. Remember to pace yourself and to plan your day according to your personal abilities.
- Communicate with your employer, and where possible, negotiate earlier, later shifts to allow for study days at least once or twice per week.
- Try to plan ahead such as packing lunches the night before so you are not rushed in the morning or start prepping for dinner in the morning so when the time comes most of the elements are already assembled
- Tape the lectures you attend, that way you can pay attention to the most important ideas and jot down additional notes. Listen to these recordings while you are doing other activities.



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- If you have any down time while waiting for your next class make sure that time is productive in some way or another, whether it be studying or perhaps a phone conference with your child's teacher do something useful.
- A great way to simplify your days is to schedule your classes on the same days so you don't have to make many trips to and from the school to catch classes.
- Do a little every day. Cramming is not a good study technique. If you spread out your studies and work a little each day in every class you will retain more knowledge and do better on your exams.
- Get up an hour earlier. This extra hour is a great opportunity for you to have time to yourself, to get a head start on breakfast, or to finish up some homework that needs to be done.
- Get some extra help from family and friends. If you really need some extra time for studying, reach out to your family and friends to arrange a babysitter for example, until you have finished all your important exams.
- Involve your family in your learning. Don't let your studies consume you to the point you are locked in a quiet room and come out only for food. Communicate with your family, share accomplishments and talk about interesting topics you are learning about.
- Don't forget play time. When formulating your schedules make time for game night with your family or date night with your spouse or a family friend. Taking a little time off here and there will award you a lot of needed relaxation and decrease your stress.
- Remember though, you don't have to do everything listed. These are just suggestions that you can try out and if they work out for you then think about adopting them into your daily routine.

## Questions to help plan and manage your study habits

### Block of study time and breaks:

Write down one best time block you can study. How long is it? What makes for a good break for you? Can you control the activity and return to your studies?

### Dedicated study spaces:

What is the best study space you can think of? What is another?

### Weekly reviews:

What is the best time in a week you can review?

### Prioritise your assignments:

What subject has always caused you problems?  
What subjects do you find easier?

### Achieve 'stage one' by getting something done:

What is a first step you can identify for an assignment to get yourself started?

### Postpone unnecessary activities until the work is done:

What is one distraction that causes you to stop studying?

### Identify resources to help you:

Write down three examples for that difficult subject you nominated above? Be as specific as possible.

### Use your free time wisely:

What is one example of applying free time to your studies?

### Review notes and readings just before class:

How would you make time to review? Is there free time you can use?

### Review lecture notes just after class:

How would you do this? Is there free time you can use?

## References:

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