

Learning Café Quick Study Tips

TIME MANAGEMENT

Time is like money: only so much is allotted to you each week. If you spend it wisely, you will have more left over to do as you wish. If you are careless with it, you will likely face stress, frustration, and perhaps even failure. It is crucial to realize that you are responsible for and in control of the decisions you make about your use of time. Time does not control you! Strong time management skills give you a chance to think critically about what you want to accomplish and spend this valuable resource in ways that maximize both your personal and academic success.



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Establish Your Priorities

- **Decide what is personally important to you.** In life, you are forced to choose between activities on a daily, if not hourly, basis. At college, these decisions can be made easier if your personal goals are clear. Consider what you want to get out of your college education, out of this semester, & out of each particular class. Consider also what direction you want your personal life to take. Consider how the decisions you make today will impact the life you have tomorrow. Once you have established your goals, you can use them to help make daily choices about how you use your time.
- **Evaluate daily activities & needs.** You will always have numerous activities you want or need to do; however, they are not all equally important. Keeping your goals in mind, consider doing the following:
 - Keep a "to-do" list to record any activities that you want or need to get done. Be sure to keep both personal & academic activities in mind. Also, include items that need to be completed immediately & those that can wait until later.
 - Evaluate the importance of each activity & create a priority list: things you *must* do, *should* do, & *could* do. Then be prepared to follow through with the most critical (*must* & *should* do) activities.
 - Track your progress. Cross off items that are complete. Regularly evaluate your priority list (some items will move up the list as deadlines approach; new items may need to be added).

Make a Plan & Stick to It!

- **Analyze your time.** How do you *currently* spend your time? And, just as importantly, how much time do you *actually* want or need to spend on each activity? Be sure to consider both your academic & personal needs. Work smart, not hard. Planning can easily cut "doing time" in half. The more time you spend planning, the more effectively you will use your time.
- **Develop & use planners:** A variety of planners can be used to keep you organized:
 1. Long-term or monthly planner – At the beginning of each semester, make a master calendar, noting due dates for all known assignments, readings, projects, & exam dates. Also, add any important personal commitments, so you can maintain some balance in your life. Check items off as they are completed. Add additional items as they arise.

2. Project planner – Use for planning ahead for larger projects or exams. Identify all the steps in completing the project & set mini-deadlines for completing each of the steps. Consider moving final deadlines up by a few days to provide some “wiggle room” if certain steps take longer than expected.
3. Weekly plan – Identify all “fixed commitments” (necessary tasks) on a weekly schedule. Then, schedule time for studying. Finally, plan time for other activities to maintain some balance in your life. Tips for a study plan:
 - Allow 1 – 2 hours of study outside class for every hour spent in class. Study for each class as soon as possible after class to reinforce the day’s learning.
 - Plan to start with your most difficult or least favorite subject. Save the easiest for last.
 - Short, frequent sessions are more effective than longer, less frequent ones.
 - Remember: A weekly schedule should give you some flexibility; however, if important activities, such as study times, cannot be completed when planned, they should be rescheduled, not cancelled.
4. Daily plan – Identify priority items to be completed that day & check them off as you complete them. Agendas work well for this.

Other Time Management Tips

- Select strategies that fit your lifestyle & personality. For example, would you prefer a pencil & paper schedule or an electronic calendar?
- Divide big tasks into manageable (1/2 – 1 hour) chunks.
- Listen well. Be clear about directions, so you don’t need to do things twice.
- Deal with things, like mail, the first time you touch them.
- Learn to say no! You don’t have to be all things to all people at all times!
- Conduct conversations standing up to keep discussions brief & to the point.
- Control interruptions, like the phone. Return messages when you have the time.
- Wean yourself from time consuming activities, like TV, video games, & MSN.
- Make the most of transition times. For instance, while walking home from class, think about an assignment idea that you will tackle later on.
- Ask yourself what things do NOT need to be done -- then, don’t do them.
- Establish routines. Get used to doing the things automatically. For example, get up & make your bed before you have time to think about NOT doing it.
- Make phone or e-mail inquiries. This consumes less time than going in person.
- Enjoy what you are doing right now. If you take some time off from study, enjoy your relaxation time, so you feel refreshed when you go back to your books.

*For more information on any of the suggestions given here, please visit the Learning Café, located in the library (CE1340) / 403-382-6952 / learningcafe@lethbridgecollege.ca
Or sign up for a Student Success Workshop!*