



Better Time Management



You have to get started on your algebra assignment, but you're already tired from band practice. And you have a huge history paper due in two weeks. Not to mention that book report (you still have to read the book!). How will you ever find time for everything? You're getting stressed out just thinking about it.

You're not alone. Students are some of today's busiest people. With assignments, studying for tests, after-school activities and doing chores around the house, there never seem to be enough hours in the day. But the fact is everyone has the same 24 hours available to use each day. The key is to organize and manage those hours wisely. You can do it! Keep reading to learn how.



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How do you spend your time?

Before you can start *managing* your time, you will need to find out how you are actually *using* your time now.

Here's how to get started:

- **Keep a time log.** Write down *what* you are doing—and *for how long*—every day for one week. Do this at 15-minute intervals.
- **Add up the time you spent** on each activity at the end of the week.
- **Compare the time you spent** on recreational screen time and other activities with the time you spent on schoolwork and reading. Is there room for change?



Once you've discovered where your time goes, you can develop a plan to use it more effectively.

Begin each day the night before

You're running late—again. Mornings *can* be hard, but you can make them easier by planning ahead.

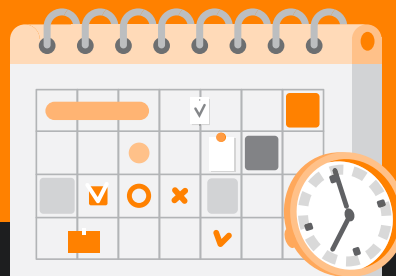
Here's how to avoid morning chaos:

- **Take a few minutes** before you go to bed at night to pack up everything you need for school—science project, history book, permission slip (signed).
- **Get your lunch ready to go.**
- **Put your schoolbag** where you can grab it on your way out the door.

In the morning, sit down for a stress-free breakfast with your family. You may even have time to review some problems for that math quiz.



Make good time management a habit



Look at the big picture

Get a calendar and write down all your assignments, due dates, chores and activities.

Here are some things to keep in mind:

- **Plan ahead** by working backwards from the due date. Schedule work on long-term assignments well in advance.
- **Set deadlines.** Remember that history paper due in two weeks? Look at all the steps involved: *Decide on a topic;*

gather research materials; read the information; create an outline; write a first draft; revise. Do some estimating. How long will each step take? Write a deadline for each on your calendar.

- **Include time** for relaxation with friends and family.
- **Post the calendar** where you can see it. Be flexible. If something isn't working, adjust.

Manage your schedule

Take Weekly Control

Don't let things sneak up on you. At the start of the week, transfer items from your calendar to a weekly planner.

As you plan your week:

- **Schedule assignments first.** Aim for completing them at the same time and place—every day. And check that you have all the necessary supplies on hand.
- **Know yourself.** For example, do you lose energy when the sun goes down? Then don't schedule late night study sessions.
- **Schedule difficult tasks first**—at times when you are at your best.
- **Don't forget to include breaks.** Plan to take a 10 minute break for every hour you spend studying.

Take Daily Control

You look at your schedule and nearly faint. The math test is tomorrow? But your English paper is due Friday!

To make the most of your time:

- **Make a daily “to-do” list.**
- **Prioritize tasks by importance.**
- **Combine activities** when possible.
- **Use extra minutes** (riding the bus, waiting at the dentist's office, etc.) for mini study sessions: Review vocabulary. Tackle a few math problems. Read.
- **Learn to say *no*** to distractions.

“I work best under pressure”

If you've ever uttered these words, you've spoken like a true procrastinator.

Sometimes a task *does* seem so overwhelming that it's easier to keep putting it off. The best way to confront it is to buckle down and just do it. Get into it for 10 minutes. You may be surprised to find you feel motivated once you get started!

Then reward yourself when you finish things as you had planned.

You can take control of your time.

By following these tips every day you'll form a time-management habit that will help you throughout your life.

“We must use time as a tool, not as a couch.”

— John F. Kennedy

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One of a series of Student Tips®

from The Parent Institute®, P.O. Box 7474, Fairfax Station, VA 22039-7474
(800) 756-5525 www.parent-institute.com

Stock No. 5022 (English) • Stock No. 6022 (Spanish)

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