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Time Management

Taking Control of Precious Moments

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Developing optimal time management skills require practice and discipline. You should always be aware of how you organize your time for revisions and exam preparations vs. other daily activities. These are some strategies to help you manage with your time:

1. There's only 24 hours a day

Remember that there are only 24 hours in a day and time does not wait for anyone or anything. All we can manage is our mindset and what we do with the time that we have. Hence, it is important to be realistic in planning the approach and amount of activities daily to optimize the time available.

2. Set time-management goals

Remember, the focus of time management is actually making the most of your limited time for exam preparations. A good place to start is by reducing time spent on other ventures. For example, set a goal that you are not to be distracted by text messages during each hour of study. You could also allocate study time between subjects to strike a balance going forward.

3. Blocks of study time and breaks

Develop daily blocks of study time. Blocks based on continuous concentration capacity typically last around 45 minutes, but some difficult material may drain absorption ability relatively quickly. Shorten some study blocks if necessary, but don't forget to return to the task at hand!

Use the intermittent breaks wisely to re-energize and compose yourself, be it a short stroll outside or light snack. Avoid activities that can compel you to over-extend your break-time, such as surfing Facebook.

Are you an early riser or a night owl? Study when you are most productive, not when you have a high tendency to feel drowsy. Make a time-table of study blocks. How long is it? What makes for a good break for you? Most importantly, stick to your schedule as best as possible.

4. Dedicated study spaces

Choose a place to study where you can maximize your concentration and be free from frequent distractions. You should also have a back-up location that you can shift to in case your optimal space is occupied. Be it the library or the coffee bistro, your optimal study environment depends on your concentration and absorption abilities. Some people are more productive with a coffee in hand, others require complete silence.

Prioritize your best environment to study over convenient locations for other ventures, be it meeting friends or having your favourite meal for lunch. Adapt those break-time ventures to your optimal study location, not the other way around.





An important feature of 'striking a balance' is adequate sleep and a balanced diet. Both tend to be overlooked, especially during the 'eleventh hour'. The effects of sleep deprivation and unhealthy diets can kick-in anytime down the road; hence do not neglect them. The minimum daily sleep time for an adult's well-being should be 4.5 hours, with the ideal being 6 to 7 hours.

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**Until we can manage
time,
we can manage
nothing else.**”

**Peter Ferdinand Drucker, 1909-2005,
"Father of Modern Management"**

5. Prioritization is key to success

It is important to prioritize your responsibilities and engagements. Some people do not know how to prioritize, ending up with less than optimal study time and environments or worse -- allowing procrastination to dominate!

Postpone tasks or routines that can be put off until your schoolwork is finished! This may be the most difficult challenge of time management. For example, your friend would like you have dinner with him tonight. Based on your study schedule and location, you were going to study for your test tonight. Moreover, you already know beforehand that you have errands to run tomorrow morning.

The uncomfortable feeling of turning friends down may creep in. However, politely saying "no" is not a sure-fire way to lose friends. Saying "no" helps to free up time for the things that are most important. Moreover, if you agree to postpone the appointment, you may find it more enjoyable after a productive revision session.

6. Strike a balance

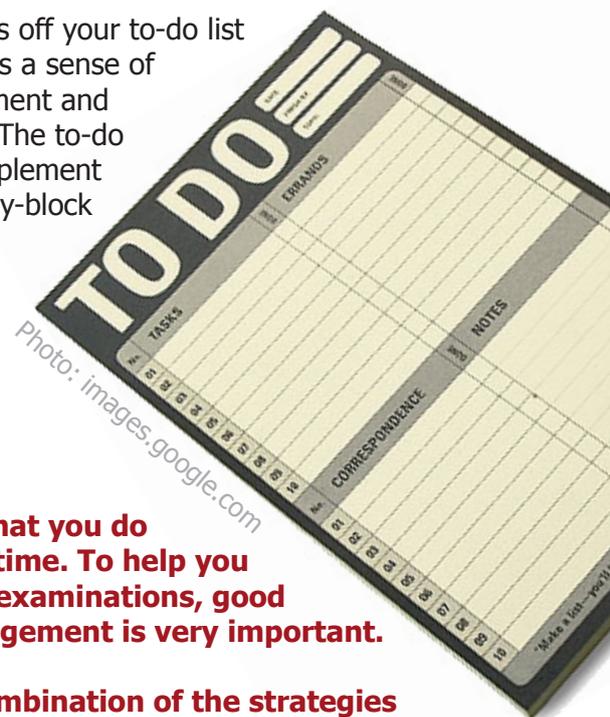
Break-times between study blocks aside, striking a balance between studies and other personal activities is important. You should engage in activities that help boost mental and physical health. For example, participating in sport activities or socializing with family and friends.

The bottom line is to reduce bad stress, enhance study capacity and remain connected to meaningful moments in life. Wouldn't it defeat the purpose of studying if you compromise your social life or find yourself ending up with a fever every now and then?

7. Create a simple to-do list

This simple initiative will help you identify key priorities, the reason for doing them, a timeline for getting them done. Make this list accessible to you in all forms of media, be it on your room door or as a pop-up in your Windows/Mac login page.

Ticking tasks off your to-do list also provides a sense of accomplishment and motivation. The to-do list is a complement to your study-block timetable.



**You are what you do
with your time. To help you
do well in examinations, good
time management is very important.**

**Using a combination of the strategies
above, develop your own time management
plan and stick to it. You can be in control
and accomplish your goals once you've
come to grips with time management.**