




Making more hours in the day

Managing your time at university



This workshop was originally produced at the  **University of Reading**

Overview of the workshop

This workshop looks at things you can do to make the most of the time you have available to study. It includes:

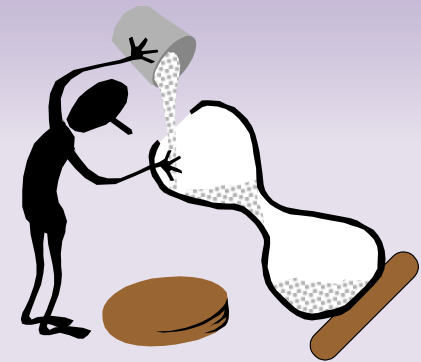
- Studying at the best time of day
- Making study practices more efficient
- Learning to prioritise – and to say no!

Poor time management is not a personality trait! It is a set of practices that can be changed. This workshop aims to help you do that...



Why do you need more hours?

Why is it so difficult to fit it all in?



- Variety of commitments which need to be balanced
- New ideas and working practices = more time needed
- Planning for the unexpected
- Could you work more efficiently?
- Is there anything you could cut out?

A bit of fun to start you thinking...

What happens if you run out of time?



“The dog ate my homework” is a classic excuse for submitting work late. Can you come up with anything better?

Work in small groups:

- Come up with a plausible excuse for submitting your work late – the more inventive, the better
- One person to present it to the whole group - a prize for the best excuse!

Choosing best times to study

A simple way to use time more effectively

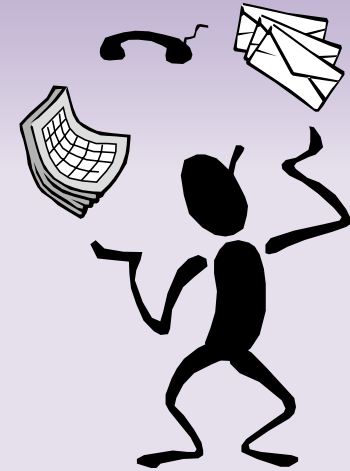


- When do you find it easiest to study? (Mornings, afternoons, evenings?)
- When do you find it more difficult to concentrate?
- Plan to do more complex tasks in your good study time
- Plan to do more mechanical tasks (or chores, keeping fit, socialising, relaxing) in your worst time for thinking
- Make a brief to-do list each evening, so you don't delay starting by deciding what to do first

Working more efficiently

What do you need to think about?

- How do you use your time now?
- Are you studying at your best times?
- Are you spending too long on particular study practices?
- Does it take a long time to get started?
- Can you find everything you need easily?
- Are you easily distracted?



Breaking bad habits

What do you need to change?

Working in pairs:

- Write the things that stop you from managing time effectively on your worksheet
- Choose one to share with your partner. Discuss possible ways to overcome or avoid this problem.
- Share this with the rest of the group. If you hear other strategies that are appropriate for you, add them to your worksheet.



Working more efficiently

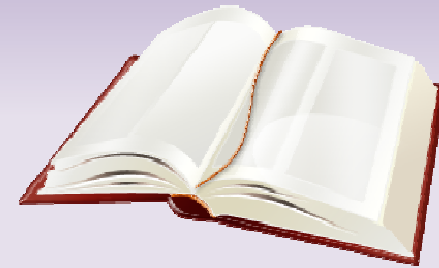
Tips to plan time more efficiently



- Have lots of small manageable targets, and reward yourself for achieving them
- Have a to-do list for the week, and for the next day
- Revise your to-do lists, study timetable and work schedule regularly to check they're still working for you
- If you're falling behind, check that you're not trying to do too much – if you've been asked to write a 1500 word essay, don't do enough research for a 3000 word one!

Working more efficiently

Tips to make reading more efficient



- Decide on the questions you are trying to find answers to before you start reading. Then look for the answers
- You don't have to read everything on the reading list! Start by choosing three texts – then add more depending on what else you need to know
- When reading on a new topic, practise staged reading – start small and general then gradually get more detailed and specific

Working more efficiently

Tips to make note-making more efficient



- Think about what you're trying to find out when reading, or what you're hoping to find out from lectures
- Leave your pen on the table when you're reading – only pick it up when you find something worth noting down.
- Try making pattern notes or mindmapping – turns your notes into another learning process
- Always add author, year and page number when you start note-making

Working more efficiently

Tips to make writing up more efficient



- If you spend more time thinking about what you're going to write, you will need less time to write it
- Always make a plan – and stick to it
- Break writing up into individual tasks that are each manageable
- If you get stuck, choose an easy task to do next to get yourself going again

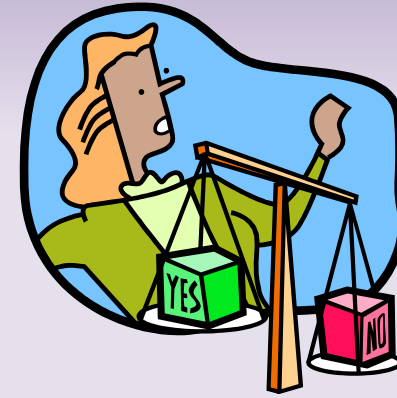
Learning to prioritise...

...and to say no!

Working in pairs:

- Make a list - is there anything you can cross off now?
- Prioritise your remaining tasks – now, soon, later
- Be ruthless and ask yourself - what would happen if you didn't do x? Justify your decisions to your partner

Take studying seriously - remember you've worked hard to get here and give yourself the time you deserve to do well



One last task...

...decide what you are going to change



Working in small groups, or whole group:

- Circle one thing on your worksheet that you're going to change
- Share it with the rest of the group
- Once you've said it, you have to stick to it!

Any questions?



For more on time management and other study practices...

LearnHigher time management webpages

For guides and exercises on all aspects of time management

www.learnhigher.ac.uk/learningareas/timemanagement/home.htm



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