



Time Management

Balancing a busy life as a college student makes your time a very valuable resource. For many students, finding enough time to manage their responsibilities, such as attending class, studying, working, and parenting, can be overwhelming. Since adding hours to the day is not an option, time management, or the ability to use one's time effectively and productively, is an important skill for success in college.

Key Aspects of Successful Time Management

- **Use a Calendar.** Trying to keep track of deadlines, appointments, and schedules without a calendar is incredibly difficult. Often students who try to just remember this information without writing it down forget important deadlines or feel very overwhelmed by the mental overload. Find a calendar system (paper or digital) that works well for you and that you will have access to every day. Calendars that are portable (for example, a digital calendar on your phone or a paper planner) work best so that you can update them on the go. Popular digital calendars include Outlook Calendar and Google Calendar. At the start of each semester, enter all due dates and important events in the calendar. Revise, add, and update as time goes on.
- **Set Reminders.** Setting reminders to stay on track regarding upcoming deadlines is very helpful. If using a digital calendar, it is easy to set up a reminder notification. If using a paper planner, consider adding an earlier note on your calendar as a reminder. For example, if you have a big exam on April 21st, add a note to your calendar on April 1st with a reminder to start studying.
- **Develop a task list.** Knowing how to focus your time is the key to successful time management. Develop a running task, or to-do, list with all the things you need to get done.
 - **Time.** Estimating the amount of time you expect a task to take can be very helpful to scheduling it into your life. When writing down a task, add a note next to it indicating how much time you expect the task to take. This is just your best estimate, and the number may change, but it's helpful as a place to start. For example, "complete assignment 6 for math class (45 minutes)".
 - **Prioritization.** Knowing how to prioritize the tasks on your list is incredibly important. Those who struggle with prioritization tend to focus their time on tasks that are less important and procrastinate on tasks that are more important. To prioritize a task, ask yourself two questions. First, how important is this task (and what would be the consequence if I did not get it done)? Secondly, when does this task need to be complete? Tasks that are deemed important and time-sensitive should be prioritized first. Use a symbol on your task list to indicate the priority rating of an item on a scale from 1 (low priority) to 3 (high priority). For example, "Complete assignment 6 for math class (45 minutes) +++", would indicate that this task is deemed to be an important priority.
- **Daily task list.** Each day, review your task list to reassess priorities. Then, create a daily to-do list made up of tasks that are considered to be your top priority. Consider the available time in your day and the estimated time of each task.
- **Reassess.** At the end of each day, reassess what you were able and unable to complete. Give yourself credit for what you accomplished and add in any tasks that have popped up throughout the day. If there were tasks on your daily task list that you were unable to complete, find a time to add them into your schedule.
- **Create a schedule.** When balancing a busy life, a schedule may be essential to managing your time well. Take a few minutes to plan out your daily schedule. Start with adding in structured events, such as time in class, work hours, commute time, family dinner time, etc. Then review your available free time and select time slots to work on the tasks you have deemed most important for the day. Schedules are easy to create and edit using a digital calendar, or you can use a paper template such as the one included with this handout. At the end of each day, review your schedule and take note of what did and did not go to plan.
- **Develop routines.** Creating a schedule that works for you will help you to develop successful routines. As you learn about how you work most effectively and

productively, you will learn how to best navigate your day for ideal time management. For example, if you notice a pattern of effective study time in the mornings, but limited productivity in the late evenings, you could choose to go to bed earlier and wake up earlier to take advantage of your most “productive zone”.

Feeling Overwhelmed

Even those with the best time management skills can feel incredibly overwhelmed by trying to fit too much into a busy schedule. If you are feeling stressed out by your to-do list, consider the following.

- **Reassess your task list.** Is there anything you can remove from your task list, simplify, or delegate to someone else?
- **Say no.** If you are someone who tends to take on responsibilities whenever you are asked, you may need to practice the sometimes challenging task of saying no. If you are constantly prioritizing the needs or wants of others, it will be very difficult to prioritize your own.
- **Manage stress.** Although it can be difficult to find time for self-care and stress management, it is incredibly important. Stress decreases productivity and the time invested into some healthy activities, such as going for a walk, may make you much more effective when tackling other tasks.
- **Ask for help.** Consider the people or resources in your life who may be able to provide some support. For example, many students find that studying with a tutor is much more impactful than studying alone. Anoka Tech offers free peer tutoring services. Other sources of support may include family, friends, your faculty advisor, or the college counselor.

Counseling Services

Counseling services are available to support Anoka Technical College students. A counselor can talk with you about any concerns or difficulties you are facing, provide support, and help in developing strategies and skills to promote wellness and goal achievement. Counseling services are confidential and free. You are encouraged to reach out for support.

To learn more about counseling services, visit: <https://www.anokatech.edu/student-services/counseling-services/>

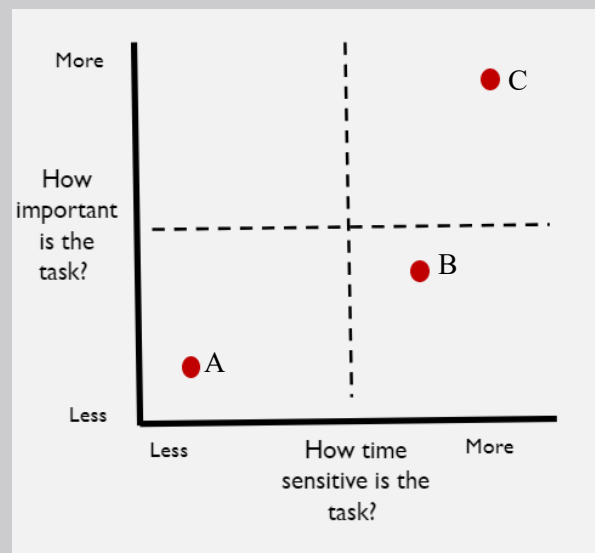
To schedule an appointment with a counselor, visit the weblink above or call 763-576-7860.

Prioritization Charting

Those who find visuals helpful may benefit from charting tasks on a priority grid when feeling overwhelmed by their task list. To do this, create a quick grid like the one below. Letter each task (A, B, C, etc.) on your list and plot the letters based on the response to each of the indicated questions on the vertical and horizontal axes.

Using the example below, task “A” was deemed to be a low priority since it was plotted as less important (in response to the question on the vertical axis; “How Important is the task?”) and as less time sensitive (in response to the question on the horizontal axis; “How time sensitive is the task?”). In this example, task “C” would be considered the top priority to tackle since it was deemed to be both very important and very time sensitive.

Practicing this charting method a few times can help you to develop the skills to more quickly and effectively assess priorities.



Seeking Help & Support

If you struggle with time management or are feeling overwhelmed, you are encouraged to reach out for support. As an Anoka Technical College student, a great place to start is with a college counselor. Counseling services are available to students at no charge. See the box title “Counseling Services” for additional details.

Daily Schedule

Date:		
Daily Task List	Time	Scheduled Activity/Task
	6:00 am	
	6:30	
	7:00 am	
	7:30	
	8:00 am	
	8:30	
	9:00 am	
	9:30	
	10:00 am	
	10:30	
	11:00 am	
	11:30	
	12:00 pm	
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11:00 pm		
11:30		
12:00 am		