

# MANAGING YOUR TIME

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Academic success often begins with good time management. To become a better time manager, include the following strategies in your approach to school:

## ✓ Allocate Adequate Time for School

Each week, often the biggest challenge that students face is juggling competing demands for time. It's especially important to be realistic about all these demands. How much time do university courses require?

### **Recommended study time allocations:**

- For every hour of class, you need two hours of study time
- Fifteen (15) hours for midterm preparation
- Twenty five (25) hours for final prep; forty (40) hours if you're at risk of failing

**This is only a guideline.** Some courses may require more (or less) independent work; some students may require more (or less) time to complete course tasks. This guideline is still useful for anticipating how much time to initially allocate to your studies. If you have greater than 18 hours per week of scheduled class time, aim for a total of 45 to 50 hours in and out of classes on coursework. If you are seeking out employment, this guideline is also useful to calculate how many hours would it be okay to work.

## ✓ Treat School like a Job

If you're a full-time student, school is your primary job. Just like a full-time career, to be successful may require 35 to 55 hours each week. Sound like a lot? Keep in mind that a 40-hour work week could take the form of five 8-hour days from Monday to Friday. This still leaves 16 hours on each of those days and an additional 48 hours each weekend for other things. While approximately 8 hours each day should be spent sleeping, that still leaves plenty of time for sports, clubs, socializing, and other activities.

## ✓ Spend Time on Each Course Every Week

Cramming is stressful and often ineffective at university. The best preparation for tests is what you do day-by-day. **Prepare for and attend all your classes and spend some time each week learning new material.** Learning as you go helps to identify and clarify the material you don't understand early so that you build a sound knowledge base, and it reinforces important information as the course unfolds. Beware of courses that you dislike or find particularly challenging: work on them regularly at a time when your concentration is best and in a place where you won't be distracted.

## ✓ Set Goals and Come Up with a Plan

Develop a plan to increase the likelihood that your goal of being a successful student is realized. A goal in itself is not sufficient. The following statements emphasize the distinction between a goal and a plan:

- My **goal** is to get an A for my term GPA (TGPA)
- To accomplish this goal, I **plan** to:
  - a) Prepare for each class every week and to review my notes after lectures;
  - b) Schedule weekend reviews;
  - c) Clarify content doubts with my Professors, during their office hours.

### **Set your goals to be SMARTER:**

- Specific:** Well defined, clear, and unambiguous.
- Measurable:** With specific criteria that measure your progress towards the accomplishment of the goal.
- Achievable:** Attainable and not impossible to achieve.
- Realistic:** Within reach, and relevant to your purpose.
- Timely:** With a clearly defined timeline, including a starting date and a target date. Create urgency!
- Evaluate:** To ensure you are on-track and that the goal is still relevant.
- Re-adjust/ Reward:** After evaluation, you either try new approaches until you find yourself getting closer to your goal, or reward yourself for having attained the goal.

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★ **ACTIVITY**

Define three goals you would like to achieve in the short, medium, and long-term.

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Outline your action plan (steps) for each of your goals, on this table:

	Steps for Goal 1	Steps for Goal 2	Steps for Goal 3
<b>Specific</b>			
<b>Measureable</b>			
<b>Achievable</b>			
<b>Realistic</b>			
<b>Time-bound</b>			
<b>Evaluated</b>			
<b>Re-adjusted/ Rewarded</b>			

# MANAGING YOUR TIME



## ✓ Plan your Week and Term

To stay on top of your school work and achieve your goals, we recommend three approaches that can be used in combination:

1. Term schedule
2. Weekly schedule/ Seven-day Planner
3. Daily prioritized task list

1. **Term Schedule:** Having a sense of the big picture contributes to effective planning. What are the major events in the upcoming term?

SEPTEMBER						
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	*2 Labour Day [University closed]	*3	*4	5	6	7
8	*9	10	11	12	*13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
*22	*23	24	*25	*26	*27	28
29	*30					

OCTOBER						
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	*4	5
*6	7	8	9	10	11	*12
13	*14 Thanksgiving [University closed]	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

NOVEMBER						
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	*15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

DECEMBER						
Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
*1	*2	*3	4	5	*6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	*14
15	16	17	18	19	*20	*21
22	23	24	25	26	*27	28
29	30	31				

## ★ ACTIVITY

Download the fillable ASC four-month calendar, and plot your **one time commitments**. These include your **academic due dates** (course deadlines, tests and assignments) as well as your **personal commitments** (student group events, medical appointments, personal trips, birthday parties, concerts, weddings, etc.).

Colour-code by course and assign a colour for personal commitments. Hang up your calendar in your study area, and add reminders to your Google Calendar and/or smartphone.

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2. **Weekly Schedule:** To help you accomplish your long term goals, you can plan your time each week to keep yourself on track with mid-range goals.

Here is an example:

	Sunday 17-Nov	Monday 18-Nov	Tuesday 19-Nov	Wednesday 20-Nov	Thursday 21-Nov	Friday 22-Nov	Saturday 23-Nov
7:00 a.m. - 8:00 a.m.		GYM					
8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.			GYM	GYM	GYM	GYM	
9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.							
10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.		QMS 202 CLASS	MHR 523 Class Prep Chap 13		GMS 200 Chaps 4-5	ACC 406 Class Prep Chap 10	MHR 523 Chaps 7-8
11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.	QMS 202 Chaps 1-2			ECN 204 Chaps 4-7			
12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.							LAW 122 Chap 6-7
1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.	LAW 122 Chaps 8-10		MHR 523 CLASS		MHR 523 Chaps 4-6	ACC 406 CLASS	
2:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.				QMS 202 Chaps 3-5			
3:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.							
4:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.		ECN 204 Class Prep Chap 12			LAW 122 Class Prep Chap 12	ECN 204 Class Prep Chap 8	
5:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.	ACC 406 Chaps 3-5		GMS 200 Class Prep Chap 11				WORK
6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.						GMS 200 Chaps 6-8	
7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.		ECN 204 CLASS			LAW 122 CLASS		
8:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.	QMS 202 Class Prep Chap 14		GMS 200 CLASS				
9:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.				WORK			
10:00 p.m. - 11:00 p.m.							

★ **ACTIVITY**

On the ASC 7-Day Planner, plot your **recurring** (firm) **commitments** first such as classes, tutorials, and work shifts. Then identify and block time available for coursework each week. This includes preparing for class, reviewing after class, as well as completing assignments to establish a routine.

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## SEVEN DAY WEEKLY PLANNER

DATE:

	Sunday / /	Monday / /	Tuesday / /	Wednesday / /	Thursday / /	Friday / /	Saturday / /
7:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m.							
8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.							
9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.							
10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.							
11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.							
12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m.							
1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.							
2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.							
3:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.							
4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.							
5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.							
6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.							
7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.							
8:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.							
9:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.							
10:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m.							
11:00 p.m. to 12:00 a.m.							

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3. **Daily Prioritized Task List:** A final step in time management is identifying specific daily or short-term goals. These can fit into weekly time you have blocked out. For example, you may know you want to spend two hours studying for your course on Monday. A daily list can help you think about what you specifically have to do in those two hours.

**Here is an example:**

*Tuesday*

- Pick up library books on hold
- Finish first draft of SWOT analysis
- Do ACC100 practice exercises
- Review class notes for the day
- Book appointment with doctor
- Do laundry

★ **ACTIVITY**

What specific tasks do you need to accomplish tomorrow?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**Ryerson tools to help you plan:**

- Google Calendar:** This is basically a master calendar with several individual calendars aggregated in one place. You can have a separate calendar for personal, business, holidays and anything else that seems necessary to you. You can colour-code your obligations, share your calendar with others (a useful feature for group work), as well as synchronize your calendar with your Gmail and get reminders on your phone.

**You can find useful tips on how to maximize the use of this tool in the following:** Ryerson Computing and Communication Services [Google Calendar Help Centre](#); College Info Geek YouTube video titled, [How I Use My Calendar Efficiently](#); Oberlo article titled, [20 Ways to Use Google Calendar to Maximize Your Day in 2019](#).

- Ryerson Assignment Calculator:** The [Assignment Calculator](#) breaks down the research, writing, and group projects into manageable steps based on your due dates. Each step includes hints and "how-to" links. You can also sign up to get email or text reminders for each step.

**Useful Apps for Time Management and Concentration:**

- [Be S.M.A.R.T.](#)
- [Calendly](#)
- [Do!](#)
- [FlipD](#)
- [Focus Booster](#)
- [LeechBlock](#)
- [Take a Break](#)
- [Things 3](#)
- [Todoist](#)
- [Wunderlist](#)

**Disclaimer:** TRSM Academic Success Centre and Ryerson University do not officially endorse the apps and sites listed here, and may not be held responsible for any technological problems that arise from their use. Please use at your own discretion.

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✓ **Reward Yourself**

Rewards can be an effective way to motivate you to get started and move beyond procrastination.

You can do this by identifying a reward that you can give to yourself once you have finished a particular task. The size of the reward should be proportionate to the size of the task that you need to accomplish. For example, a relatively small task, like making a list of possible resources for your upcoming term paper, could be rewarded with allowing yourself to call a friend back home. A larger goal, such as finishing the final draft of a term paper, deserves an even bigger reward, like an evening out with friends.

Here are a few examples of intrinsic rewards, those that are internal or have a positive psychological effect, and extrinsic rewards, which are tangible and external to yourself:

**Intrinsic Rewards**

- Pausing to enjoy a sense of progress
- Congratulating yourself on completing a task
- Reflecting on how it felt to submit your assignment on time
- Writing in your journal about your accomplishment

**Extrinsic Rewards**

- Treating yourself to a snack
- Calling a friend
- Going for a run
- Watching an episode of your favourite show

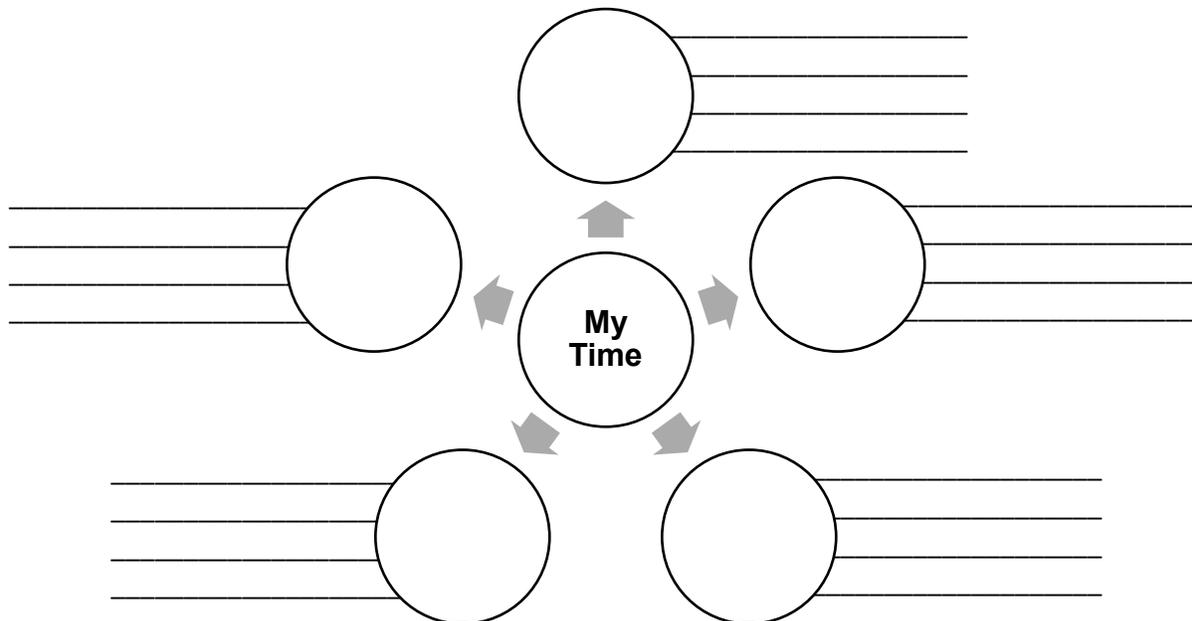
★ **ACTIVITY**

Create a list of at least five rewards you can implement into your study routine to help reduce procrastination:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

✓ **Reconsider Your Requirements and Your Roles**

How many roles do you have? Want? Or, think you have to play?



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★ **ACTIVITY**

a) **Where does most of your time go?**

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b) **What would you like to change about that?**

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c) **Which requirements/ roles would you like to lessen, delegate, or give up?**

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✓ **Ten Tips for Saving Time**

**1. Set your goals**

Apply the bow and arrow concept when managing your time: set your goals first! Arrange your daily activities according to your own goals!

**2. Prepare**

Write down your plan for the next day in the evening before! Include unexpected things and routine into your schedule!

**3. Set your priorities**

Complete the important things first, the unimportant things can wait! Beware of the tyranny of urgency!

**4. Get organized**

Use a calendar and check lists, and set reminders to be on top of your obligations!

**5. Eliminate distractions**

Put that phone aside, shut your door, and turn the TV off! Change your phone settings to turn off social media notifications.

**6. Summarize**

Carry out similar tasks in time blocks: phone calls, e-mails, texting your group, etc.

**7. Simplify**

Divide difficult tasks into smaller steps! Determine the time and order in which you will carry them out!

**8. Learn to say “No!”**

Don't always be available for everyone! Use and arrange your appointments prioritizing yourself!

**9. Enjoy your success**

Appreciate tasks you have carried out as successes; reward yourself!

**10. Seek help in becoming an effective time manager!**

The Academic Success Centre's Peer Academic Coaches (PACs) can help TRSM students learn and practice effective time management skills. If you're not sure how to proceed, if you'd like more suggestions, or if you're looking for someone to help set goals and monitor progress, meet with a PAC or book an appointment with the TRSM Learning Strategist.

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## References

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