

Planning a Better Study Schedule

1. PLAN A SCHEDULE OF BALANCED ACTIVITIES.

- College life has many aspects. Some of the most common are fixed: EATING, CLASSES, CAMPUS ORGANIZATIONS, WORK, and CHURCH.
- Many are flexible: SLEEPING, STUDYING, RECREATION, PERSONAL (errands, family, laundry).

2. PLAN ENOUGH TIME FOR STUDYING EACH SUBJECT.

- Most college classes are planned to require about three hours work per week per credit in the course. By multiplying your credit load by three you can get a good idea of the time you should provide for studying in addition to time spent in class.

3. STUDY AT A SET TIME AND IN A CONSISTENT PLACE.

- Establishing habits of study is extremely important. Knowing what and when you are going to study saves a lot of time in making decisions and retracing your steps to get necessary materials, etc.
- Avoid generalizations in your schedule, such as "study chemistry" at certain regular hours. Instead, plan to "complete ten equations" or "read and take notes on chapter 6 for Chemistry." Treat your study time as you would a class: don't miss it unless you're sick, have a family emergency, etc. It should be a permanent part of your daily routine.

4. STUDY AS SOON AFTER YOUR CLASS AS POSSIBLE.

- One hour spent shortly after class will do as much good in developing an understanding and memory of materials as several hours a few days later. Re-copy/type notes while they are still fresh in your mind; fill in the gaps. Start assignments while your memory of the assignment is still accurate. By doing this, it will be easier to transfer information from short-term to long-term memory.

5. UTILIZE ODD HOURS DURING THE DAY FOR STUDYING.

- The scattered one or two hour free periods between classes are easily wasted. Planning to use them for studying for the class just finished will result in free time for recreation and other activities at other times in the week. Make use of daylight hours. Research shows that what you can accomplish in one hour during the day can take one-and-a-half hours at night. In general, our minds and bodies are ready to "wind down" at night rather than "gear up" for work.

6. LIMIT YOUR STUDY TIME TO NO MORE THAN 2 HOURS ON ANY ONE COURSE AT ONE TIME.

- After 1 to 2 hours of study you begin to tire rapidly and your ability to concentrate decreases rapidly. Taking a break and then switching to another course will provide the change necessary to keep up your efficiency. Do difficult work when your mind is most fresh. For some students, it is in the morning; for others it is in the late afternoon. Space out your study periods and take appropriate breaks (e.g., 10 - 15 minutes after 1- 1 ½ hours of study).

7. TRADE TIME - - - DON'T STEAL IT.

- When unexpected events arise that take up time you had planned to study, decide immediately where you can find the time to make up the missed study time and adjust your schedule for that week. Also, make good use of

weekend evenings. This "trading agreement" provides for committing one night to study, but rotating it as recreational possibilities vary.

8. PROVIDE FOR SPACED REVIEW.

- Schedule one day per week to review the work in each of your courses and be sure you are up-to-date. This review should be cumulative, covering briefly all the work done thus far in the semester. This may take only 10 - 20 minutes per class. This will save you time later when you are preparing for tests/finals.

9. REVIEW, REVIEW, RECITE, RECITE.

- Organize your notes in a question and answer form, and think in terms of questions and answers about the main ideas of the material as you review weekly. When preparing for exams, try to predict the questions the instructor may ask. Reviewing and reciting increase memory. This will save time in the long run.

10. KEEP CAREFULLY ORGANIZED NOTES ON BOTH LECTURES AND ASSIGNMENTS.

- Good notes are the best basis for review. Watch for key ideas in lectures and try to express them in your own words in your notes. Know when assignments are given and when they are due. It may help to date them and number the pages.

11. LEAVE SOME UNSCHEDULED TIME FOR FLEXIBILITY.

- Lack of flexibility is one of the main reasons students do not follow a schedule. Make your schedule and stick to it. Remember that it usually takes 30 days to establish a habit.

Adapted from: Idaho State University Academic Skills Center, <http://www.isu.edu>.