



2

How to Manage Your Time:

Time Management and Planning

Objective:¹

- To formulate a *study timetable* that enables you to complete your work on time without undue stress.

Time management and planning are essential skills to learn. Every semester some students try and do three assignments in the last week. This produces huge stress and poor outcomes.

Time Management = Self-Management

- How well organised are you?
- How soon after a lesson do you learn your notes?
- How much time should you spend revising notes?²

“Research shows a strong correlation between self-discipline and academic achievement.”³

Planning:

1. In any course there will be a set % of marks for each assignment, and any other test/s. Study the guidelines and work out where you need to spend most of your time in relation to where most of the % is.⁴ If the tests are worth 10% and the essays 40% and 50%, then you need to spend more time on the essays.
2. Remember, although allocated readings and note taking in lectures are not marked, they do constitute great resources for your assignments and thus it is important not to neglect them.

¹ Near the beginning of all course outlines you will find the “course objectives”, they are important. They tell you what the lecturer is covering and what you need to know on completion of the course.

² See further information in, Emmanuel Manalo and Julie Trafford, *Head Start: How to succeed in tertiary studies* (Auckland: Pearson Education, 2003), 19–35

³ B. Zimmerman and A. Kitantas, “Comparing students’ self-discipline and self-regulation measures and their prediction of academic achievement,” *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 39 (2) (2014): 145–155.

⁴ You will find these guidelines in your course outline available on CareyOnline.

Where to Study?

You can study at home or on campus. For some students home can be distracting with small children, parents, or household chores waiting. At Carey the library offers group study areas, areas to study *quietly* with friends, and quiet solo study areas. Some students enjoy studying in the dining room. Find the place that works for you. Preparing for study is important.⁵

Here are nine essential tips for a good study environment. Be sure your environment conforms to all of them where possible:

1. Is it free from distractions, like TV and phone? (Multi-tasking is proved to reduce efficiency on the primary task).
2. Do you have a good size desk and comfortable chair?
3. Adequate heating, lighting, ventilation?
4. Shelves for books, folders, etc.?
5. Space for calendar, diary, timetables, etc.?
6. Access to reference books and other essentials resources?
7. A lot of students study in the sun, lying on their bed, or in front of the TV. Ask yourself, why am I studying here? It may be nice, a pleasant change etc., but rarely are those places very effective for study. The best place is at your desk, close to your resources. Plan to study hard for a set amount of time and then enjoy the sun, TV or whatever.
8. Know your body patterns. You will know if you are a morning person or evening person. When do you study the best, maintain the best concentration, etc.? Most people have a peak of mental activity in the middle to late morning, a physical peak in the middle of the afternoon. Do you work best in public with others or in your own room? Find out.
9. Start your study at a regular time each day. Get into a routine that works for you and stick to it. **Treat study like going to work.** You have set hours and would like to get through X amount of work. This means deciding beforehand what and when you will study. Don't study only when you are in the right frame of mind (you may never feel like it!).

Assignment and Revision Planning:

1. Top students have a study timetable of some sort. They know *what* they need to do, *how* to do it, and importantly *when* they will do it. Do you?
2. On a weekly, monthly or yearly planner *write in due dates* of assignments etc. Put this somewhere where you can easily glance at it often. Courses at Carey are generally 15 credits in value which is equivalent to around 150 hours of learning. These courses will

⁵ For ideas of how to decide what suits you; Louise Tamblin and Pat Ward, *The Smart Study Guide: Psychological Techniques for Student Success* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 13-26.

have various due dates for assessments, so be sure you know when work is due. This should make it easy to plan your study timetable.

3. On your daily schedule *that you will draw up* plan when you will do research for assignments. Plan to revise each week's work on the day after it is completed, and then the following day to do a 10 minute revision. 20-40% of a week's material is likely to be retained on the day it was studied, and the next. One week later only 17% is likely to be retained.⁶ So while you know it – learn it.
4. Plan regular rests, distractions like TV/Facebook and calls to friends. During study time try putting your phone on “silent”. Guard your study time jealously, and use your rest time well. Play sports, keep fit, eat well, and read devotional literature, sleep is especially important.⁷ Just make sure that your life, even as a student is balanced.
5. Set yourself goals – short, medium and long term goals. 'By this date I will complete this assignment, this revision, etc.' (it may help to have a friend or mentor to hold you to account on this). Each week check how the plan is going. This may be a new skill for you; it will take time to work out how much time you need for assignments, reading, etc. Your plan should help you, not set you up to fail.⁸

⁶ N. Coster, *Success with Study* (Christchurch: Coster, 1987), 45.

⁷ Tamblin, *The Smart Study Guide*, 24-26.

⁸ This book has a handy checklist for assessing your plan, and plenty of examples. Manalo, *Head Start*, 22-27.