



Want to increase your productivity? Try this:

Goals

- Set SMART goals (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, time-bound).
- Be very clear and precise.
- Use positive statements.
- WRITE your goals down.
- Break goals down into small, realistic, achievable action steps.
- Keep a task list and check it regularly (see self-monitoring).
- Visualize yourself achieving your goals.

Priorities

- Focus on one thing at a time, stop multitasking.
- Define what your priorities are.
- Use a priority matrix (e.g., Eisenhower's Urgent-Important Principle).
- Do the uncomfortable thing first.

"The most important thing is that the most important thing is the most important thing"

Victor Küppers

Plans

- Use a calendar or planner.
- Plan your days, weeks, and even your semester.
- Use your syllabus at the start of the semester and add all your assignment to your calendar, highlight the most significant ones.
- Try to plan your upcoming week no later than Friday, so that you can include the weekend in your plan to work ahead (instead of catching up the weekend after)
- To learn at the college level, expect to invest 6-9 hours into homework for each 1-credit course.
- Pull forward work from busy times into less busier times.
- Include breaks in your plan (e.g. work for 90 mins, take a 30 minute break).
- Include free time, fun time, travel plan in your schedule.
- Reserve time for unforeseen emergencies (buffer time).
- Break large projects down into smaller more manageable pieces.
- Calculate how long it will take you; be aware of planning fallacy and add some extra time to your estimates.
- Set a deadline for each task.
- Set reminders and notifications.
- Commit to keep given times (Self-discipline).

Self-monitoring

- Reward yourself for the effort not just the outcome.
- Understand where your time goes, start tracking your time making short notes every hour.
 - How much did you get done?
 - Did you estimate enough time?
 - Identify where your estimates and actual time don't match up.
 - Did you get distracted? (Keep an interruption log)
- Keep score of your progress and goal achievement to have an overview of your productivity.

Time Savers

- Get organized, declutter, and you will find things quicker (e.g. separate folder for each class, throw away what you don't need)
- Eliminate distractions, every time you get distracted you lose focus and time. (e.g. close your browser, turn off your phone)
- Say no. if you say yes to everything other people will decide your schedule and not you.
- Cut down (or stop) watching tv, which is one of the biggest energy robbers
- Set yourself a deadline or time limit for a task (Parkinson's law = Work expands so as to fill the time available for its completion)
- Set yourself little challenges such as "I will get this done in 2 hours"
- Do a lot of your homework in the morning (The same tasks will take you 50% longer in the evening)

Additional Time Management Hacks

- Work ahead, submit assignments 2 days before they are due.
- Do it now! Stop procrastinating! It's all about getting started. Start now!
- Use the pomodoro technique (work for 25 minutes, take a 5-minute break, after 2 hours take a 30-minute break).
- Surround yourself with productive people.
- Fake it till you become it (act productive to become productive).
- Pretend every day is the day before the deadline ☺.
- When you get overwhelmed, concentrate on one thing at a time
- Avoid burning out
 - Take time off every week
 - Get enough sleep
 - Invest time in self-care
- Use your time wisely, do reading on the bus or train, use time in between classes for homework, even 30 minutes count.
- Be aware of tasks that can be done in short times, like responding to emails, picking up a book from the library, doing laundry.
- Reflect on your attitude, motivation, commitment, and self-discipline. What is getting in your way of implementing some these tips mentioned here?

For any new habit, especially the ones that require lots of self-discipline, start small. Pick just a few or only one of strategies and tips mentioned here and start incorporating them in your daily and weekly routines. Once a new habit is formed, go ahead and test out additional new strategies.

Resources:

- *Time Management Secrets for College Students* by Dennis Stemmle
- *The Productivity Revolution* by Marc Reklau