

Finding time to study

Whether you're studying full time, part time, at work, at college or at home, time management is one of the most important skills you'll develop. Managing your time effectively helps to reduce stress and maximise success; it's a skill that you can use in all aspects of your life.

Some of the ideas here may help fit the demands of your course around your personal and work commitments. Try them and see what works for you.

Before you start studying

Start to plan as soon as you have been offered a place on a course. Contact the course tutor and ask for advice about how much time you'll need to set aside for study. If you're learning at work, you'll need to know the balance between work-based learning, time spent in college and working at home.

To help you find time for study try recording what you do and how long it takes you every day for a week. Be really honest about how you've spent your time and look for times that could be set aside and used for things like assignments.

Make a timetable that includes study time, your working hours, and time for your friends and family. Put your personal commitments in your calendar so that you can see where deadlines conflict.

Planning and prioritising - getting off to a good start

- Be clear about what you've got to do, and when you have to do it by, so there is no last minute panic when an assignment or project is due for completion.
- Organise your paperwork so you don't waste time looking for things.
- Make sure friends and family know what you're doing so that they give you some space.

Keep yourself going

- Make lists so you don't forget things. Crossing things off will make you feel good!
- Give priority to what is most urgent and important. Use the calendar and reminder system on your mobile phone, an electronic to-do list such as www.tadalist.com, or an online organising system like www.backpackit.com to record your deadlines, notes and reminders and keep track of other things going on in your life. If you've got a Smartphone or an iPad, look for free apps.
- Stick to your timetable if you can - but be prepared to be flexible if circumstances change.
- Break down mammoth tasks into small steps – it will make them seem more manageable.
- If you find a particular part of the course difficult move on and return to it later - it may make more sense when you have studied further
- Make contact with fellow students - it helps to know you are not alone.

- Learn new material and make notes as you go - this can really save time later.
- Don't panic if you get behind - most students get behind sometimes. Tell your tutor or lecturer of any difficulties you are experiencing – don't wait until it is too late for them to help.

Other study skills help

- Find out about help and resources at your college.
- The Open University Skills for Study website offers a range of study skills materials. www.open.ac.uk/skillsforstudy
- The Open University's OpenLearn project offers free downloadable educational material on a range of subjects including study skills, and is constantly updated. www.open.ac.uk/openlearn
- The 'Know it all' website has clear and simple advice on study skills including time management. www.nwlg.org/pages/resources/knowitall/studyskills/time.htm

Have a look in the Study Skills section of your local bookshop. The titles listed below are a selection of recommended books.

- **The Study Skills Handbook**-by Stella Cottrell (Published by Palgrave Macmillan; 3Rev Ed edition-Feb 2008) ISBN Number: 0230573053
- **The Buzan Study Skills Handbook: The Shortcut to Success in Your Studies with Mind Mapping, Speed Reading and Winning Memory Techniques**-by Tony Buzan (Publisher: BBC Active-22 Dec 2006) ISBN Number: 1406612073
- **Essential Study Skills: The Complete Guide to Success at University**-by Tom Burns and Sandra Sinfield (Published SAGE Publications Ltd-Second edition-22 April 2008) ISBN Number:1412945852
- **How to Write Better Essays**- by Bryan Greetham (Published by Palgrave Macmillan-2d edition-29 Feb 2008) ISBN Number: 0230224806
- **How to Write Essays and Assignments**-by Jonathan Weyers and Kathleen McMillan (Published by Prentice Hall-26 Jul 2007) ISBN Number: 0273713574
- **The Good Study Guide**- by Andy Northedge (published by The Open University 2d rev edition-5 Feb 2005) ISBN Number: 0749259744

You'll find many more in any good bookshop or by searching www.amazon.co.uk .