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The Classroom

3 Valuable Tips for College Success



“...studies have proven that having solid time management practices is a higher determiner of a college student’s grades than even their SAT scores.”

-see page 3

Table of Contents

About the Author	3
Contacting Day-Timer	3
Why would you take the difficult route through college?	4
Let's Get You Started!	5
Activity #1: Hold a Weekly 15-Minute "Me" Session	5
Activity #2: Take "5" each morning	7
Bonus Tip: Learn to take killer notes	8
Learn more, have more time for fun - begin today!	9
Start your time management control center	10
Send Us Your Best Tips!	11

Are you going to struggle or are you going to succeed?

I'm not going to lie to you – college is still a lot of hard work.
But there are two ways to go:

1) Get by and muddle along.

- or -

2) Have a plan and control your time!

Follow the plan I've laid out for you here and the path to success is all yours!



About the Author



Day-Timer Spokesperson Jeff Doubek shares tips, methods, and secrets to better productivity at work and at home each week on the Day-Timer blog at: <http://www.daytimer.com/blog>.

Popular posts include:

- ★ [The Secret to Better Study Skills for College Students](#)
- ★ [4 Simple Steps for Making Your Goals Happen Today](#)
- ★ [The Easy Fix for Facing Stressful Tasks](#)
- ★ [Why You Should Learn to Love Deadlines – and How to Do It](#)

Have a question about this article or general comments about your own productivity? Please feel free to send Jeff an email at jeff.doubek@daytimer.com.

Contacting Day-Timer

Day-Timer is the most recognized name in personal productivity and organization. Incorporating proven time management principles, Day-Timer helps individuals achieve their personal and professional goals, prioritize the activities that matter most, and balance their work-life commitments.

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Why would you take the difficult route through college?

If you listen to all the stories you'd think that cramming for exams, pulling all-nighters, gaining 15 pounds and stressing over last-minute deadlines is normal.

Guess what? It's not. That's an uphill struggle. Stressful, sleep-deprived conditions are no way to do your best work and enjoy life.

After all, college is the most important step in a young adult's life. Your success in school can become a launching pad into a great job and promising career.

What's your time management plan?

What separates a successful college student from the rest is one thing – having good time management habits. ***In fact, studies have proven that having solid time management practices is a higher determiner of a college student's grades than their SAT scores!***¹

Can you imagine? All that emphasis placed on college entry exams, when in reality institutions should be stressing the importance of time management. The good news for you is that you have a leg-up on all the other students entering class this year.

Are you going to struggle or are you going to succeed?

Amazingly, statistics show a only little more than half of you will succeed in college.² Which group do you want to belong to?

I'm not going to lie to you – college is still a lot of hard work. But there are two ways to go: get by and muddle along, or proactively plan and be a master of your time!

Follow the plan I've laid-out for you here and you'll not only have a much easier time getting good grades and having fun, but you'll also establish good habits for succeeding in life.

This Definitive Guide on Time Management for College Students will change your life, I promise. And, when used in conjunction with a one of our [student planners](#) – designed just for busy students like you – you can catapult yourself toward graduation and a successful career after college.



¹ "Effects of time-management practices on college grades." Britton, Bruce K.; Tesser, Abraham Journal of Educational Psychology, Vol 83(3), Sep 1991, 405-410.

² U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Spring 2009, Graduation Rates component.

Let's Get You Started!

Look... I know a lot about college, but it doesn't take an expert to know that mornings are the most difficult time for students. Just getting yourself going is typically the biggest challenge of your day.

Here's the good news for you... you have what the others don't: a step-by-step plan for getting the most out of your day. Just get out of bed and follow the plan. That's easy enough, right? The only decision you'll have to make is where you'll be getting your morning coffee. College sounds pretty good at this point! Right?

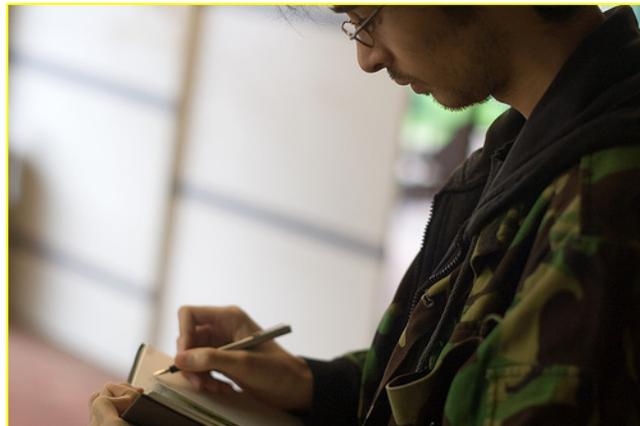
There are two crucial but quick activities you must learn in order to make this happen, feel free to rely on this guide to walk you through them each week:

Activity #1: Hold a Weekly 15-Minute "Me" Session

This may be the most important activity of your entire week, and it takes only about 15 minutes.

It's called the "Me" session, because it's just you, alone. It's an appointment with yourself that allows you to set your schedule and plan your activities for the week.

- **Schedule 15 minutes per week:** I recommend Sunday right after lunch, because it lets you view your entire week with a clear head and a fresh mind
- **Find solitude:** Go to a place where you can be alone and undistracted



I'm sure you will have no trouble making these two arrangements. Campus is full of unique places for students to find solitude.

Now, simply follow these steps in order I have written them:

1. **Plan your committed time:** Using the weekly calendar in your planner, block out your committed time, that is, hours dedicated to classes, work, and other important appointments.
 - ★ **Tip:** you may find it helpful to use different colors for your various categories (e.g. green for classes, red for work, blue for personal stuff like doctor's visits)

2. **Plan your study time:** (1 class = 30 min) Plan to spend a minimum of one half hour for each class you have each day
 - ★ **Tip:** Use your daytime hours. Schedule study times in-between and right after classes. It's the best method for reviewing the information while the subject is still fresh in your mind. And it keeps you out of last-minute study mode.
3. **Schedule overtime:** On test or term paper weeks you must devote extra time to that subject. Schedule additional time for these studies, spread throughout the week or weeks prior to the deadline. It's okay to reduce study time in other classes to compensate, however, be sure not to ignore them altogether.
4. **Keep it fun:** Give equal attention to the other side of life, the fun side. Be sure to schedule times for fitness, games, social activities, reading, and other interests. Make these activities commitments as well or you'll find yourself neglecting them.
5. **Include downtime:** if you over-commit your time your system will fail. You absolutely must leave segments of time throughout your day for breaks, meals, personal hygiene and rest. Label these boxes as "OPEN."
6. **Make a Weekly Task list:** Write down everything you need to and want to do this week. Include your studies, your homework, your laundry, your club activities and your job, and be sure to include fun activities.
7. **Review last week:** Run through your notes from last week and see if any new appointments or tasks were written that you need to be addressed this week.

In order to give you a better idea of what I'm talking about, here's a sample schedule of what a typical week may look like:

	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
8am			Class 4		Class 4		
9am		Class 1	Study 4	Class 1	Study 4	Class 1	
10am	Fitness	Class 2	Study 1-3	Class 2	Study 4-5	Class 2	Club Activity
11am		Study 1	Break	Study 1	Break	Study 1	
12pm		Study 2		Study 2		Study 2	
1pm	Me time		Class 5		Class 5		
2pm	Laundry	Class 3	Study 5	Class 3	Study 5	Class 3	
3pm		Study 3		Study 3		Study 3	
4pm	Study			Fitness	Club Activity	Fitness	
5pm		Student Gov.		Pay bills			
6pm			Bowling Night			Concert!	
7pm		Study		Study			

That's it! One 15 minute session, each Sunday. If you do nothing else in terms of planning -- at least do this! It's a quick and easy method that will keep you on top of your studies and ahead of the game.



Let's talk about balance...

College is a *life-changing experience* that includes classes, friends, dorms, professors, co-eds, parties, clubs, libraries, dorms, mentors and co-workers. You need balance in order to truly benefit and enjoy this experience. Divide your time into 5 specific categories, choose:

1. **School:** includes classes, studies, study groups, projects/papers, exams
2. **Activities:** school involvements outside of class including campus groups, social interests and sports clubs
3. **Home:** pertains to activities that deal with your dorm, your apartment, or wherever you happen
4. **Work:** your job if you're working – even part time
5. **Self:** activities that deal with you alone, your finances, your fitness, your health and wellness

Now, as you plan think of each category being a different colored crayon. Your week should look be a mosaic of colors, with activities from each different category. That, my friend, is where you will differ from the others who plan in one color, listing only their studies.

Activity #2: Take "5" each morning

As a student, there is so much you want to accomplish each day, yet homework and exams seem to be your only focus. The heavy amount of reading and study assignments alone can leave you frozen, not knowing where to begin.

For that, I have another simple yet valuable plan you can use to organize your daily activities. And the best part is you can do it in only 5 minutes! A simple daily routine in the time it takes to enjoy your first cup of coffee. Do it each day and I promise you'll feel less stressed about your day and you'll feel better about what you get done.

1. **Create a daily to-do list:** Pull tasks off the weekly list you made during your Me Session Only list tasks that you can realistically accomplish today, otherwise you really won't take your list seriously
2. **Prioritize your tasks:** Number your tasks in their order of importance. Start with the tasks that must be done (facing consequences) and end with tasks that can wait until another day
 - ★ Tip: just because a task is urgent doesn't always mean it's important. Remember this because you'll spend lots of time on last-minute activities that may not be as important in the big picture. *For example, returning a long-distance phone call may not be as important as spending time reviewing class notes*
3. **Review your schedule:** look ahead at the schedule you made during your Me Session and see if it still works. This is a key time to familiarize yourself with the day



ahead, and make any necessary adjustments, such as skipping a class for additional study time

That's it. It's amazing to think that only **five minutes** of your time can have such a tremendous influence on your daily success, but I assure you it's true!

The benefits of this are clear: you are able to better understand the big picture of what you're doing with your time, and it allows you to keep important appointments and events from falling through the cracks, or surprising you at the last minute, which can happen all too often when things get hectic.

Make it specific, and make it fit

Always be sure your tasks offer detailed instructions. Don't just write the word "biology" on your list, it's a large, unapproachable word. Instead, create tasks that begin with a verb and offer clarity as to the subject.

For example "biology" becomes "Review biology notes"

If your task can't be turned into a specific action, it needs to be broken down into smaller actionable step, as I did in this example. Makes sense right? That's a task that accurately describes what you need to do.

Also, be sure to keep your list short. It makes no sense to create a giant laundry list of things that you'll never get done. It sets you up for failure, and creates a negative spin on your day. It's always a good idea to plan your day conservatively. If you find yourself having extra time, that's a good problem!

Bonus Tip: Learn to take killer notes

In order to succeed in college, learning a system of killer notetaking *must* be one of your top priorities.

Now, I studied journalism – a subject heavily reliant on notetaking abilities. But what I soon found out was that taking detailed, scannable notes vastly improved all other aspects of my college experience. I was able to recall and remember more things than the other students, and nothing slipped through the cracks.

Try these tips:

- **Outline your topics:** The first and most crucial tip is that you write notes in a simplified outline format. Skip the roman numbers and letters. Instead, use a large bullet to indicate a major topical area, and then indent slightly with small dashes to indicate supporting points. Don't focus on grammar, write only the key words that describe actions or facts
- **Always think with a pen in your hand.** Whether you're walking, talking, studying or working. Throughout the course of your week, you write down a lot of information. A lot! Classmate's phone numbers, weekend social plans, job leads, or directions to a house party. And guess what? Your brain can't handle all this!



That's why it's a good idea to get into the habit of keeping a planner or notebook with you at all times.

- **Not just in class**, but outside of class as well. When you are having a conversation, or idea, or thought run through your head. Make it a habit to write it down right away. It declutters your brain and keeps important appointments and responsibilities from falling through the cracks.
- **Avoid the scrap zone**, a habit of writing notes on whatever is handy: note pads, class printouts, envelopes, and other miscellaneous scrap paper. This is a recipe for disaster because you are almost certain to forget where you wrote down that most crucial piece of data. Dedicate one single location for all your notes and information. One reliable planner or notebook. It just makes good clean sense.
- **If you're electronically-focused**, when an idea pops into your head, get into the habit of writing quick email messages to your self from your smartphone. Just be sure it makes it to your task list.
- **Use symbols**. As you take notes, using symbols is great way to save time, because you can just scan back through your notes as opposed to reading them word for word. Choose a few key symbols such a "star" for important ideas to remember, an "@" symbol for tasks needing follow-up action, a dollar sign for bill and money-related notes, and a "?" for questions needing research.

Create your own notetaking system and it will pay huge dividends on your ability to quickly manage information.

Learn more, have more time for fun - begin today!

Most students enter college and already know what their biggest challenge will be: Keeping on top of their studies.

Now, throw in the fact that you're also now feeding yourself, paying personal bills, working a job, doing activities, and trying to have fun all at the same time. Yes, succeeding in college takes discipline and follow-through, but more importantly you need to have a plan of attack. Otherwise you'll find yourself always playing catch-up and never getting ahead.

Follow the student time management plan I've shown you in this guide and you've got a tremendous path to success.



Start your time management control center

A final key to your success is having a time management control center. Sounds complicated but it's not!

A tremendous amount of important information comes your way each day, and having a quality day planner is your most dependable tool for managing your schedule, tasks, and personal notes. It's your constant and reliable companion.

Go to DayTimer.com today and shop our specialized line of [student planners](#) that were designed with the busy student like you in mind. They handle all of the time management needs mentioned in this guide, plus, they offer valuable features such as:



- ★ **Flexible planning formats** – give you freedom to plan your week, your way
- ★ **Built-in storage pocket** – for holding your student ID, loose notes, or a bus pass
- ★ **Student-specific pages** – useful sections for grade tracking, class schedules, expense recording, project planning, and educational references
- ★ **Weekly student tips** – a little extra motivation to succeed

Remember that Day-Timer is here to support you. We create our planning solutions in order to help you find your path to success, so please visit the wealth of articles and resources we offer at our website <http://www.daytimer.com> and please contact me if you have any questions about how you can get more things done, better manage your time and achieve your goals.

Enjoy your time!

Jeff



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Send Us Your Best Tips!

You can learn so much from those around you. That's the best part about college after all. We'd love to hear what kinds of things you do to keep your head above water and living a healthy and balanced life in college. Are you on track with your goals? Please share with us how you do it.

We'll take the best and most unique pieces of advice and publish them in upcoming versions of this guide.

Here are a few of the best time management tips for college students by college students that we've received so far:

"My advice is simple: at the beginning of each week, I make two lists. The first is of all the important things I need to work on schoolwise. Tests, papers, projects, etc. The second list is for everything else... mostly social activities, laundry, my workout schedule and bills. Each week, I challenge myself to have my list completely crossed out. It works!"

-- Cassidy Michaux, West Virginia University

"I keep a calendar with me at all times with my class itinerary written down. It's never more than arms reach away, even at night. It's the only way I can remember things because I am way overbooked!"

-- Robert Mahoney, Colorado State

"Here's my system: I dedicate one page in my notebook to each day, and everything from that day goes in it. On one side I write a schedule and on the other side I write all my todos and notes. I can flip back through my notebook and see everything I've done for the past few months."

-- Victoria Ireland, University of Colorado

Your best tip should be here too!

Email your advice on time management and organization for college students to jeff.doubek@daytimer.com. We look forward to sharing your success with the world!

