

# Building Your Plan

## Now it's your turn!

Complete the following worksheets step by step. This will build your plan in small pieces, building up to a clear, written plan of your next steps that are easy to take.

### If making a plan that combines school and life makes you feel overwhelmed:

1. Do this planning process for school first and then for your life responsibilities (it will be easier the second time you run through it!).
2. Next, you can compare your top priorities, goals, and reasonable timelines.
3. Then, combine the two to see how you will map out your weeks and know what priority to choose when you come to difficult situations where you are limited in time or energy.

You may have a lot going on in your life, that's ok, you don't have to be perfect. Even starting to think about your priorities and goals will make a difference. You got this!

## Time Management

Time management might sound kinda gross, or maybe it excites you. But what is it?

### What is Time Management?

Time management is figuring out how all the demands in your life blend together and managing these different priorities. You have college, jobs, family, and more that pull at unscheduled time every week. You can make a plan for each college session, every week, and even every day to help you successfully meet your goals. Customize the plan to how you think and your level of energy - maybe lots of details or maybe a bit more general.

Making a plan with "staying power" helps you stick to your plan and get your goals.

### What does Time Management do for you?

There are quite a few benefits when you find a plan that really works for you. You know it's working for you when you are experiencing these outcomes:

- Reduced Stress
- Staying Focused
- Achieving Goals
- Work-Life Balance
- Boost Confidence
- Less Procrastination
- More Quality Time with Loved Ones
- Building Strong Relationships
- Planning for the Future
- Increasing Real Productivity
- Sense of Fulfillment
- Enhanced Self-Discipline
- Improved Decision-Making

**Remember:** Make a realistic plan that works for YOU. Nobody is perfect, and no plan is perfect. Give yourself breaks in your schedule to rest and work to balance rest with productivity. Everything should link back to your main goal....which you will get to next!

# Priorities, Goals, and Timeline

**Let's get started!** Answer these questions below honestly and personally to find your motivation and guide your plan.

## 1. WHAT do you want to achieve?

## 2. WHY do you want to achieve it?

## 3. WHEN do you want to achieve it?

When will you start?  
When will you finish?

## 4. HOW are you going to achieve?

Write out your steps to success:

Step 1:  
Step 2:  
Step 3:  
Step 4:  
Step 5:

## Example:

### 1. WHAT do you want to achieve?

- A. To pass all my classes in fall semester
- B. To have work/school/life balance

### 2. WHY do you want to achieve it?

- A. To set myself up for success for my future career and save money by not repeating classes
- B. To reduce my weekly stress levels and feel like I can invest in my family and my time in college

### 3. WHEN do you want to achieve it?

- A. Start beginning of fall semester. Finish at the end of the semester
- B. Start Nov. 1 to Dec. 31. Continue each semester I am enrolled.

### 4. HOW are you going to achieve?

A. Write out your steps to success:

- Step 1: Get a weekly planner
- Step 2: Write down class due dates and tests/quizzes
- Step 3: Write down my work schedule in planner
- Step 4: Schedule study time in my weekly planner
- Step 5: Review my planner each week, maybe changes

B. Write out your steps to success:

- Step 1: Create a weekly schedule I can easily follow
- Step 2: Communicate my plan to my family
- Step 3: Write down all my booked times (ongoing)
- Step 4: Talk through learning stress with instructor
- Step 5: Start assignments early, a little at a time

# Planning Your Typical Week

## More planning...yay!

It can feel like you're doing a lot of planning - you are! BUT taking the time to come up with the plan makes it easier to follow the plan more naturally throughout the semester. It's a little bit of work up front, but the pay off is worth it.

**Now, take some time to piece together what a typical week for you will be.**

## 1. Brainstorm by listing your weekly responsibilities, tasks, and to-dos.

Again, this process doesn't need to be perfect. Write down all the things you need to do in a week, work and class schedules, appointments and those less predictable things to account for. Focus within the timeline of your goal - when you will be starting and finishing.

Use the next sheet to list these out. Use another paper if you need more space. You can refer to the list below to think about what you will need to consider.

### Family Responsibilities:

- Children
- Aging Parents
- Sick Family Members
- Family Needs
- Meal Times + Groceries
- Pets

### Relationships:

- Family Time
- Friendships
- Significant Others/Spouses

### Personal Care:

- Sleep
- Nutrition/Meals
- Physical Activity
- Rest/Down Time
- Mental Health

### Work:

- Work Schedules
- Work Events

### College:

- Class Times
- Homework + Projects
- Study Time
- Student Opportunities
- Student Resources

### Future Career

- Work Experience
- Training Workshops
- Career Counseling

## 2. Review your list and choose 3-5 top priorities for each week.

There are some non-negotiables you have. Consider what must be done every week, and if you had to let something go, what would be ok slipping one week. For example: getting groceries is important for daily energy and continued health, but not cleaning the house for one week might be ok if you truly need a break.

Write your Top Priorities in the left column on the brainstorm sheet. This list will remind you what you can't drop when it gets busy.



# BRAINSTORM

Weekly Priorities, Tasks, and Considerations

## TOP PRIORITIES:

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*Example: Complete homework on time.*

## TASKS/TO-DOS:

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*Example: Study 30 minutes for Chemistry.  
Exercise on the weekend.*

## CONSIDERATIONS:

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*Example: Every other week I have an appointment with my doctor.*



# Planning Your Typical Week

## 3. Now you can map it onto a weekly template to visualize it together.

This is where the magic happens! Once you see how your time is actually mapped, you will know where your time and energy goes. It will be easier to say yes or no to opportunities when they pop up (like friends wanting to hang out or job networking event).

1. **Start** with writing in your class schedule and your work schedule.
  - a. It is recommended that for every hour you spend in the classroom, you study a minimum of 3 hours outside of class. For example, a 2-credit hour class would require about 6 hours of study time per week.
2. **Write in** in your family and personal schedule (picking kids up, routine doctor appointments, get-togethers).
  - a. Weekly occurrences will look different based on your situation.
3. **Check** the time still available in the week and write down how much time is available for study time, friendships, and extra opportunities and other time-taking routine tasks.

### Remember:

1. It doesn't have to be perfect! But put something down on paper and update it when you notice a pattern of what's working and what's not working.
2. It's just a *typical* week - you will definitely have weeks where time is more or less limited.
  - a. Think about the tasks that can be shortened (but ideally have more time!) or removed and also extra ones if you have time.
  - b. This will give you flexibility when those busy weeks come and you aren't wanting to make those decisions in the moment. The plan should provide relief!

**Wow! You did it! Amazing!**

## If you are on a roll, you can take a look at next steps. Or save for later!

1. Review your time management process, thoughts, and things you learned.
  - a. What are your takeaways?
  - b. How can you apply or use those takeaways soon?
2. Review your goals and see if they are still true. Choose how frequently to do this.
  - a. Sometimes goals change over time - that is ok! Stick to the big ones that are deeply meaningful to you, like maybe graduating, but change the short-term ones if your life situation changes.
3. You need community. Who can you bring with you on your goal-achieving journey?
  - a. Not everyone you know will be a best fit for this level of accountability. Think about who you can rely on for support and encouragement: Family members, Instructors, Friends, Academic Coaches, Advisors
  - b. Create a plan with them to check in frequently on your goals and steps.
4. Once you complete your goal, it is time to celebrate. How will you celebrate?
  - a. Consider people you want to include or places you want to go. Use this as a motivation when it is difficult to stick to your goal.

# Map Your Week

	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
8 am							
9 am							
10 am							
11 am							
12 pm							
1 pm							
2 pm							
3 pm							
4 pm							
5 pm							
6 pm							
7 pm							



# Tips for Time Management

- 1. Calendar/Planner** - Use a physical or digital calendar/planner to plan ahead. Plan your day, your week, your entire semester. Manage class times, exam times, and deadlines. Color code what is most important. This gives you a visual of light/busy weeks and allows you to plan ahead for them.
- 2. To-Do Lists** - Make a daily to-do list. Plan what needs to be done today. Crossing off tasks generates a sense of accomplishment and relief.
- 3. A-B-C Priority Method** - Set priorities on what needs to be done first. Write down tasks and assign a letter: A = must be completed today; B = would be nice to finish today; C = can be pushed off to tomorrow if necessary.
- 4. Switch Gears** - Know when to switch gears. Good time management includes the ability to be flexible. When Priority C becomes Priority A, it is time to switch gears.
- 5. Procrastination** - Notice (and deal with) procrastination. Procrastination leads to anxiety which leads to an even worse problem. Figure out why you are procrastinating. If you don't have enough time or don't want to do the work, it's time to revisit your priorities. If you don't understand, it's time to visit with a Professor, Professional Tutor, Academic Coach, or Study Group.
- 6. One Thing at a Time** - Work on one project at a time. Work suffers when attempting to do multiple things at once. Concentrated focus is the best way to learn and produce high quality work.
- 7. Breaks** - Take frequent breaks. Do not force focus. Know when it is time to step away. Take a walk, have a snack, do a load of laundry, find something that will distract the mind and bring clarity.
- 8. Deadlines** - Do not miss deadlines. Complete the work before it is due instead of playing catch-up later. Staying ahead of deadlines is the key to making deadlines.
- 9. Study Group** - Join a study group. You will receive multiple perspectives and avoid procrastination. This is a great opportunity to share notes, discuss confusing topics, and provide peer-to-peer support.
- 10. Be Realistic** - Be realistic about time. Compare your estimated time vs. your actual time. Start to record how time is actually spent. This will give you a better planning perspective for the future.