

Get TIME On YOUR SIDE

BY JENNIFER NICHOLS

We asked college students around the country what their biggest problems were adjusting to freshman year, and time management was consistently one of their top issues. Mastering some basic time management skills can help you get the whirlwind of college deadlines and activities under control.

Experts say that good time management is all about prioritizing. But that can be tough when you're trying to prioritize everything from classes to activities to socializing to sleep.

THE FIRST STEP is figuring out what's important to you. Dr. Edward O'Keefe, author of *Self Management for College Students: The ABC Approach*, suggests listing your goals for college. Don't limit your goals to academic ones. "You should use college to develop the rest of yourself, in addition to your academic self," says O'Keefe.

Seeing your goals on paper will help you determine what you feel is worth spending time on.

NEXT, FIGURE OUT how you work best. College is all about independence—it's up to you and only you to decide when, where, and how you study. Ask yourself these questions:

■ **DO I WORK BEST WITH A FULL OR EMPTY SCHEDULE?** "My highest GPAs come when I've been directing a play, and my lowest GPAs are when I've found myself bored," says Jon Adler, a theater major from Bates College in Lewiston, Maine. "But my friend on the football team consistently does poorer during the football season than in the off-season."

■ **AM I A MORNING OR EVENING PERSON?** Some students have a really tough time in the morning, but others are like Leah McConaughey, a biology

major at Bowdoin College: "I know that I get up early and can't stay up late at night, so trying to force myself to stay awake and study late into the evening is a waste of time."

■ **CAN I TUNE OUT DISTRACTIONS EASILY?** The answer will tell you whether you'll be able to study in a rowdy dorm, or whether you'll have to schedule time to hit the library.

Keeping On Schedule

How can you make time management more habit-forming? Use these guidelines:

■ **KEEP TRACK OF YOUR TIME.** Students who keep a log of their time very often find they have much more free time than they thought.

■ **WRITE STUFF DOWN.** You can go high tech (a laptop or handheld organizer) or low tech (day planner or notebook).

But have something handy at all times to write notes to yourself or jot down to-do lists.

■ **BALANCE YOUR CLASS LOAD.** Scheduling all your classes on two or three days rather than throughout the week can turn ugly.

■ **MAKE USE OF DAYTIME HOURS.** College freshmen are often in the old habit of waiting until nighttime to do their work. Instead of vegging in your room or hanging out in the

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dent lounge, use that hour between classes to hit the books.

■ **TAKE A BREAK.** Make sure your schedule includes short breaks between study sessions. Jennifer Adams, a history and design major from Mount Holyoke, would reward herself when she finished a big project. "Going for a walk around the lake, drinking some hot cocoa, renting a video, going out with friends—it's very relaxing for me before I jump into something else," she says.

■ **TALK TO YOUR PROFESSORS.** As a freshman, McConaughey remembers being intimidated by her professors. But eventually, she realized they were human—and, for the most part, more than willing to help her if she got into time management jams.

■ **GET CREDIT FOR WORK YOU DO OUTSIDE OF CLASS.** Adams took on the task of maintaining her school newspaper's Web site, and she was able to use that work for her final project in a journalism class. That saved her time.

■ **LISTEN AND LEARN.** "Put your notes on tape or tape your lectures," says O'Keefe. "Carry them with you, and whenever there's dead time, pop the tape in and listen to your notes."

■ **DON'T SWEAT THE SMALL STUFF.** This is perhaps the most important time management advice of all: Things like laundry can fall through the cracks of even the best time manager's schedule, and that's OK.

"The only person who sees my laundry is me," says Adams. "It needs to get done, but is the world going to stop if it doesn't? Probably not."

Jennifer Nichols is a frequent contributor to CAREERS & COLLEGES.

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