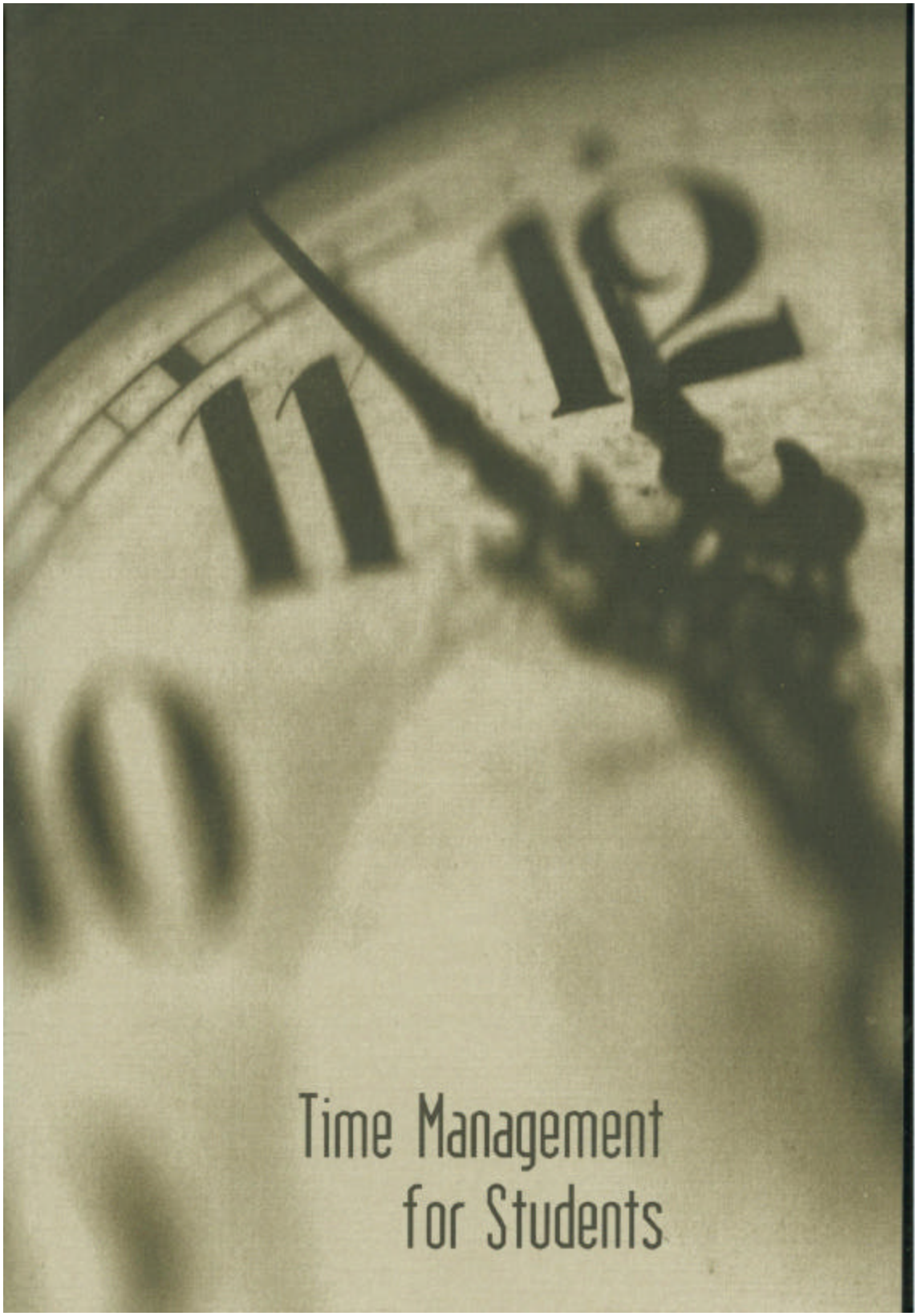

Time Management for Students

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Foreword

The Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development's (OSHPD) Health Professions Career Opportunity Program (HPCOP) promotes the recruitment and retention of ethnic minorities in health professional training, and works to increase the number of minority health professionals practicing in health care shortage areas. HPCOP activities focus on undergraduate and recent post baccalaureate students from the three largest underrepresented minority groups in the health professions: African-American, Native American, and Hispanic.

The program was launched in 1977 and began receiving State General Fund support in fiscal year 1979-80. In 1981, the California legislature enacted Chapter 434 of the 1981 Statutes, Article 3, Division of Health and Safety Code, mandating the continuance of HPCOP. Staff provided health professional development training until 1986 when, because of growing needs, the program began contracting for the delivery of training.

All activities are coordinated by three full-time permanent staff- a program chief, a staff services analyst, and a program secretary. College and university student interns are also employed to assist with various program activities.

For a list of publications, more information, and referral to minority health professional recruiters, please contact:

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The Student and Time Management

Time management simply means to manage *your* time effectively to accomplish *your* goals. To manage means to take control: You direct your own efforts. However, the word, *effectively*, is the key to proper time management — to effectively manage the time allotted for *all* of your activities, not just study time or class time.

Health professional schools challenge you with an enormous amount of information to master. Therefore, time management is an essential tool for your educational survival. Learning to manage all of your time will also help you to succeed in the clinical years of your health professional training.

Cramming doesn't pay

For the successful health professional student, the word, *cramming*, cannot exist. Cramming serves no good purpose. It is a short-term memory process that yields little but anxiety and worry. Health professional training requires you to retain information for the long-term. For example, a medical student must absorb and *retain* enough cumulative information to pass the U.S. Medical Licensure Exam (USMLE), Part I (after the second year) and Part II (during the senior year). You cannot cram two and four years of information into

your head. Effective time management will ensure you have enough hours, minutes, and seconds to learn the necessary information.

Good time management depends on time planning and time budgeting. In health professional school, your studies are your highest priority. Depending on your previous training, you will spend more time on some subjects than on others. For instance, you may have been a biochemistry major in college and are very familiar with the subject. You may only need to study a few nights before biochemistry exams. However, genetics may be more difficult, and you will need to spend many hours absorbing this new material. You must be a good manager of your time to dedicate the necessary attention to *every* class.

Know yourself

We each have different backgrounds, abilities, and resources to draw upon. Some of us learn faster than others. To get the most out of your abilities, you must know your weaknesses and strengths. Are you a morning person? Do you do your best work late at night? Do you put things off? Are you a good juggler of the things you must do? Do you become frustrated if you have too many

tasks?

As an individual with a unique background, *you* know you better than anyone. You alone must decide how much you need to study each subject. This is one area where you cannot afford to cut corners.

Develop effective study behavior

If you practice time management techniques, you can do more work in less time. That includes the time you spend studying. This manual will help, but ultimately it is up to you to develop your own effective study behavior. Establishing such behavior is essential for your survival in health professional school. You may get by for a time on poor habits, but eventually it will catch up with you.

You may already have developed several methods of study that work well for you, but be ready to adopt new techniques. The following tips may be helpful:

• Don't jump from one place to another. If possible, study in the same place each time; familiar surroundings will be less likely to distract you.

• Study where you can concentrate and your surroundings don't compete for your attention.

• Don't socialize when you study. Studying with

friends often leads to wasted time.

• At the start of each study session, decide what you are going to accomplish. Set goals, such as the topics you want to learn by the end of the evening.

• Say to yourself, "I came to study," and do it, nothing else.

Every lecture you attend provides you with abundant information. You have to decide how much attention to detail you spend on each subject. How do you decide what to study? To what extent? Use your class notes as a guide. Study them as soon after each lecture as possible. If you have taken good notes, with important points highlighted, they will indicate what you should concentrate on. Review the notes carefully and clarify points with the instructor.

Rewriting (or typing) notes will reinforce your memory of details. Study everything that is hard to understand; don't dwell on details you do understand; don't duplicate work; and have a good reference book available. Use the reference book to clarify points, then ask your professor or an advanced student to explain them further.

The difficult part of mastering study skills is learning to use your high-energy hours to your best

advantage. Studying from 6:00 to 11:00 each night is fine — if you spend those hours effectively. However, you will be tired on some nights; your concentration could wander for hours. Don't push it. When fatigue sets in, stop and do something else. This may be the time to run errands or do your housecleaning. On other nights, depending on your health and alertness, you may be able to study for longer periods.

Maintain your health through diet and exercise; condition your mental alertness and stamina gradually. Conditioning is hard work. To be a master at studying, you must practice conditioning. Through conditioning, the difficult becomes habit, the habitual easy, and the easy beautiful. Once you are a master at studying, you'll have more time for other activities.

Make good use of your class time and lectures

Lectures and labs provide an important mode of learning. You may spend 32 hours a week attending classroom lectures and labs. Each subject contains numerous details. You must know what to study, or you will waste valuable time on minor details that may not improve your school performance. During lectures and labs, you learn which topics to master.

Also, lectures provide you with an outline of

what to study for tests and other exams — for instance, for a medical student, what will be covered on the USMLE. Many professors form exam questions directly from lecture notes. Be alert and attentive when you attend lectures.

- Study for lectures *beforehand*. You will be provided an outline of all lectures for the quarter or semester and, in some cases, pages you should read. By studying before lectures, you will become an active listener, be able to retain information more readily, and better determine what topic is more important than another.
- Jot down points that are unclear to you. Clarify them during the lectures.
- By preparing for lectures, you will find lectures more interesting and less confusing.
  a. The material will not be new to you;
  b. You will not spend time trying to decipher what is being said;
  c. You can listen to understand, not simply take down information; and
  d. You can learn how well you understand the material.

Take your rest and recuperation (R&R)

You spend most of your day at school. With

four hours or more of lectures in a day, much of your learning takes place in the classroom. To be receptive to learning, you must be alert. To function well, you must have adequate sleep. Don't try to get by on less sleep than your body and mind demands; you will only reduce your attentiveness during lectures and your effectiveness while studying.

Do your daily tasks *daily*

When you are too tired to concentrate, do tasks unrelated to studying. Cook, clean house, and do routine tasks. Run errands, listen to music, gather research material, or complete odd jobs. Here's where you can afford to cut corners. Plan your time and combine tasks so you can free up time for other things.

Another way to cut corners is to cook in advance, refrigerate or freeze, then heat for later use. Also, most schools have cafeterias. By eating in the school cafeteria, you can save many hours of shopping, preparing, cooking, washing, and cleaning.

General rules

Here are some additional words on time budgeting: Use a calendar to jot down examination dates, deadlines, and other activities for each period. Once you do this, plan your time so you have

enough time:

- to study / to sleep
- to socialize and to meet personal needs
- for recreation and other purposes

Always leave time for recreation. Recreation will increase your mental alertness and your ability to handle the great volume of work you will face. Relax on the weekends. However, if you fall behind in your studies, use weekends to catch up.

Keep a log, but don't clutter it with too many details. A general plan is sufficient. The key is discipline; master that. Stick to your plan; don't be distracted; and learn not to put things off. You will always have something to do.

This brochure will provide only some of the answers to your particular circumstances. Use your creativity to find other ways to manage your time effectively. To survive in health professional school, you must not only manage your study time but also your life.

Time your most important resource

People can be divided into three groups:
those who make things happen,
those who watch things happen, and
those who wonder what happened.
John W. Newburn

How much attention do you give to managing your most important resource — time? Since no one has more time than another, managing time is critical.

Give attention to your working style and assumptions about time. Focus on: (1) knowing yourself and (2) comparing your assumptions and working style to those known to be effective for executives and professionals. You can then look ahead to your objective — your personal action plan that will yield many payoffs in the days and years ahead.

Assumptions about time management

All of us continually face the inevitable tension between *expectations* (held by our professors, peers, and ourselves) and *resources* (especially time) to accomplish our goals. Your productivity and effectiveness in meeting expectations hinge on your assumptions about time management. You must

begin with a commitment to becoming more effective and productive. In the following checklist, identify your assumptions, and give yourself a starting place for understanding your time-management needs.

Self-Assessment Checklist

Do you believe you can:	Yes	No
1. Savor time as much as save it?		
2. Control your work before it controls you?		
3. Systematically examine where you spend your time:		
At work?		
At home?		
At play?		
4. Plan for tomorrow today?		
5. Work from a plan *you* have established?		
6. Stick to a schedule once it is set?		
7. Work smarter not harder?		
8. Avoid interfering with the work of others?		
9. Improve your job conditions, and do your job better?		
10. Learn to delegate work to others?		
11. Give optimum attention to your most important tasks?		
12. Plan your "unavailability" to accomplish important tasks?		
13. Balance *your* work, family, recreation, exercise, and relaxation time?		
14. Model time management techniques so others find it contagious?		
15. Identify the enemy- *they* is probably you?		
16. View time as a priority and find the time to do what is important?		
17. Concentrate on one thing at a time and continue until you complete it?		
18. Continually ask yourself: "Why am I doing this? Is this the best use of my time?"		
19. Avoid feeling guilty about tasks you cannot do?		
20. Increase your productivity by increasing your planning time?		

Scoring the checklist

Number of Yes's _____

Number of No's _____

If you answered *yes* to:

- *17 or more* of the questions, you are ready to absorb the ideas in this manual. Your chances are excellent for putting the ideas to immediate use.
- *12-16*, you need considerable study of the ideas presented. Implementation will require more discipline.
- *2-11*, you will have to work hard to ensure relevance to your work; implementation will be an uphill struggle.
- *one or none*, prepare yourself for poor performance during your first year of health professional school. However, if you change your attitude you may improve. All things are possible.

Self-analysis checklist

ALWAYS
OFTEN
SOMETIMES
RARELY
NEVER

YOU KNOW YOURSELF — THE *REAL* YOU — BETTER THAN ANYONE ELSE. ASK YOURSELF THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS. ANSWER THEM WITH A,O,S,R,N *HONESTLY*, THEN LISTEN TO YOUR ANSWERS.

1. DO I SPEND TOO MUCH TIME SOCIALIZING?

_____

2. DO I TAKE LONGER BREAKS THAN I SHOULD?

_____

3. DO I TRULY RELAX DURING LUNCH AND BREAKS?

_____

4. DO I SPEND TOO MUCH TIME TALKING?

_____

5. HOW OFTEN DO I FEEL "PRESSURED" AT SCHOOL?

_____

6. DO I TAKE ENOUGH TIME TO PLAN MY WORK?

_____

7. DO I LIST WHAT I WANT TO ACCOMPLISH?

_____

8. DO I PRIORITIZE THE LIST IN ANY WAY?

_____

9. DO I SPEND TIME ON WORK I SHOULD NOT DO?

_____

10. DO I SPEND TIME ON PERSONAL ACTIVITIES WHILE AT WORK?

_____

11. DO I FEEL RESTED AND IN GOOD PHYSICAL CONDITION?

_____

12. DO I SET A GOOD EXAMPLE FOR OTHER STUDENTS?

_____

THERE IS NO SCORING FOR THIS ACTIVITY. WE ALL RECOGNIZE THE "BEST" ANSWERS. THIS SELF-ANALYSIS ALLOWS EACH OF US TO FACE OUR INADEQUACIES AND INEFFICIENCIES AND TO DETERMINE THOSE AREAS IN WHICH WE CAN IMPROVE. REALIZING THE EXTENT OF ANY DEFICIENT BEHAVIOR IS A FIRST STEP IN CONTROLLING THE USE OF TIME.

Using a Time Log

Time Log A

All time-planning requires systematic analysis of how you spend your time now. You can use various formats for your analysis, but an effective plan should include the following components:

1. **Activities:** All workday activities, including:
   - phone calls
   - routine tasks
   - planning
   - note-taking
   - handling problems
   - scheduling
   - visitors
   - paperwork
   - personal growth
   - studying
   - lectures
   - reflecting
   - other
2. **Share of time spent.** Estimate the time you think you spend in your activities, then compare that with what you *actually* spend.
3. **Time of day.** Everyone has prime-time productivity hours and low-energy periods. By looking at the time of day you handle each activity, you may learn where to make modifications. For example, if afternoons are a low-energy time for you, you may wish to complete your daily tasks then. You can reserve evenings for studying.
4. **Importance.** Vital time-log ingredients are the sources of your activities:

- school-imposed
- lecture-imposed
- professor-imposed
- self-imposed
- discretionary
- other

If others take up much of your time, and this is a barrier to your effectiveness, identify the sources to help you make changes accordingly.

5. **Setting priorities.** All students have more to do than can be done in a given day. Do high-impact tasks first. A task *priority* has two components: *urgency and importance.* $P = I + U$ (the lower the number, the higher the priority). Rate your activities according to the following scale:

Importance

1. most important
2. very important
3. somewhat important

Urgency

1. must be done right now; must complete today
2. must be done soon; would like to complete today
3. must be done sometime; can wait until tomorrow

By analyzing daily or weekly activities, you can identify their priority ratings and then work on "first things first." If you assign the urgency rating of *1* to

an activity and the importance rating of *1*, using the formula, $P = U + I$, your priority for that activity would be *2* — the highest rating.

6. **Method of disposition.** A time log can help you analyze each item to determine if you are the person to do them. You can handle work activities at least six ways:
   a. Delegate to someone else.
   b. Consult with others.
   c. Ignore it.
   d. Inform others.
   e. Say "NO."
   f. Handle it yourself.

Time log B

Directions:

Use this time log to determine your behavior patterns. Be honest with yourself about the way you do things; don't modify your behavior to make your use of time look better. That would negate the purpose of keeping a log. Check the appropriate column to record how you spend your time each day. You can enter additional headings to those suggested.

Time Log B

(copy and use)

Day of Week_____

Date_____

	7:00 a	8:00	9:00	10:00	11:00	12:00 p	1:00	2:00	3:00	4:00	5:00	6:00	7:00	8:00	9:00	10:00	11:00 p
Telephone																	
Lectures																	
Visitors																	
Preparing Reports & Other Paperwork																	
Studying																	
Study Breaks																	
Personal Activites																	
Planning																	
Entertainment & Physical Activity																	

Goals and plans

Do you contribute to your achievements by setting adequate goals? Let's look at how to state goals in terms of time. Examples and forms are provided later.

Yearly goals. Write down your annual goals. To retain sight of your mission, efforts, and target activities, state each goal clearly and concisely. For example, one yearly goal could be "to graduate from the first year of medical school with a 4.0 GPA."

Quarterly (or semester) goals. Breaking down annual goals into quarterly objectives does two things: You make your overall goals more manageable and you can follow up to assess your progress. For example, to get that 4.0 GPA during your first year, you must earn A's in *all* classes. If you expect a C in biochemistry or anatomy, you'll have to adjust your expectations and change your annual goal.

Monthly goals. A benefit of setting monthly goals is that you can assign manageable time blocks for your activities. Realizing monthly goals generally ensures your achieving quarterly objectives. For example, if you want an A in biochemistry, set aside adequate study time each month to ensure success on exams.

Weekly and daily goals. These are "things to do" — the core of your time-management planning. They keep you on target and guard against your confusing *activity* with *achievement.* To attend all lectures would be a daily subgoal; to review all lecture notes for the week would be a weekly subgoal. Such "to do" lists direct your activity toward achieving your monthly goals. On the following pages, you will find forms that can aid you in listing annual, quarterly, monthly, weekly, and daily goals.

Annual Goals, 20____

☐ Calendar year, Jan. 1 - Dec. 31
☐ Academic year, _____-_____
☐ Other _____

Goals for the selected period

Goal 1

Goal 2

Goal 3

Goal 4

Goal 5

Reminder: Limit annual goals to broad statements

Quarterly Subgoals

Annual Goal:

Quarter: 1, 2, 3,

Goal A

Goal B

Goal C

Goal D

Note: One of these forms will be needed for each annual goal.

Also, it is better to use a separate form for goals each quarter.

Monthly Subgoals

Month_____

Goal 1

Goal 2

Goal 3

Goal 4

Goal 5

Goal 6

Goal 7

In relation to the following annual and quarterly goals:

Annual,20__, Quarter_____

	Quarterly subgoals
I	A B C D E
II	A B C D E
III	A B C D E
IV	A B C D E

Weekly-daily activity planner

Tasks for the week of_____to meet subgoal___for the month of_____, 20___.(See monthly subgoal sheet).

Monday _____

Tuesday _____

Wednesday _____

Thursday _____

Friday _____

Saturday _____

Sunday _____

Daily time plan sheet

To-do list for today:

No.	Activity	Priority	Hours	Status

Note: Fill out and prioritize this sheet before beginning your activites each day. Activites should be in concert with the applicable weekly and monthly goals. See Sample Daily Time Plan.

General tips for time management

Due to the pressures of daily living, we sometimes overlook the obvious in managing our time. We can become so task-oriented that we confuse mere activity with solid goal-directed achievement. Use the following tips as reminders to use your time more effectively:

1. Prioritize your daily activities into things you *must* do first today, things you *will* do today, and things you will do today *if time allows.*
2. Aim to achieve subgoals of your major goals.
3. Keep Murphy's Law in mind:
   - Nothing is as simple as it seems.
   - Everything takes longer than you think.
   - If anything can go wrong, it probably will.
4. Take time to *plan your work;* then *work your plan.*
5. If you fail to plan, you plan to fail.
6. "Know thyself." If your responsibilities are growing faster than you can meet them — if you are under your job rather than on top of it — consider a change in tactics.
7. Limit time spent on less-important activities and those that do not move toward your personal goals.
8. Unless they fit your goals, do not accede to the

wants of others.

9. Most of what you need to know has already been done; it's probably in your files or the library.
10. Copies of past years' tests (in almost any subject) are filed in the library. Review them to get an idea of important study areas *before* you study.
11. Analyze your time use. You achieve 80 percent of your results in about 20 percent of your time. Use your time effectively.
12. In the absence of clear goals and concise objectives, time cannot be well-spent.
13. Be sure most facts and alternatives are available before deciding on any problem.
14. When faced with minor decisions, make up your mind quickly, but base your judgment on facts.
15. Remember, indecision can waste more time than a wrong decision. If you cannot decide quickly, ask for advice from a qualified source.
16. Plan tomorrow's work before you go to sleep tonight. Prioritize each item of the plan.
17. Use the wastebasket. It is a fine time-management tool. Wastebaskets are cheaper than file cabinets.
18. In laying out your work-day plans, remember

four basic activities: (a) today's unfinished work; (b) daily routines; (c) new project starts; and (d) unanticipated phone calls, visits, messages, and mail. However, you should not try to budget every minute of every day.

19. If you study with other students, get them organized. Don't gossip about professors or waste time in other ways.
20. Schedule activities carefully; be specific about dates and times.
21. To communicate, be simple, relevant, human, brief, and specific, and you will be well-understood in minimum time.
22. An open-door policy does not mean an open study door. Close it and keep your mind on your work.
23. Control interruptions. Eliminate personal or telephone small talk.
24. Place a dollar value on your study hours: Remind yourself of your hourly salary, then ask yourself whether what you are doing is worth your time.
25. Avoid working on something you know nothing about. Get information from someone who knows more about the subject than you do (for

example, if you don't understand certain mathematical equations in your biochemistry class).

26. Designate times for daily tasks.
27. Improve your writing and reading skills; the time saved could be critical.
28. Learn how to say *No*, and say it.
29. Stick to your task at hand.
30. Intersperse the dull with the interesting.
31. Set reasonable deadlines for yourself and your peers; focus your discipline to stick to these deadlines.
32. In estimating time to complete a task, be realistic. Nothing wastes time more than redoing shoddy work. Allowing a little more time may get the job done well the first time.
33. If disorganized in your work, you waste your time and probably that of others.
34. Socializing "on the job" can cost time — not only for you but for those with whom you socialize. Four people engaged in 15 minutes of small talk waste one hour of time.
35. Daily half-hour study breaks waste two-and-one-half hours a week, ten hours per month, 120 hours per year. This equals 15 eight-hour days a year.

36. Employ the technique of "stand-up conferences." When visitors come to your study room, meet them at the door, discuss the point, thank them for dropping by, and get back to work.

37. **DO ...**

- Savor time as well as save it.
- Control your work or it will control you.
- Plan for tomorrow today.
- Work from a plan.
- Know where your time is spent — the examined life is worth living.
- Plan your unavailability so you can accomplish important tasks.
- Finish important jobs first.
- Stick to your schedule once it is set.
- Work smarter, not just harder.
- Tell others of your time management goals.
- Spend time improving (as well as doing) your job.
- Take time to do the right job well, rather than just do the job right.
- Fill your calendar, but schedule times to cushion against unexpected situations.

38. **Don't…**

- interfere with the work of others; you waste your time and theirs.
- say to yourself, "I don't have time"; time is a priority.
- bother telling everyone how busy you are.
- stop-start your activities.
- do things that don't count.
- do your work better than needed. You may neglect another area.
- say Yes to everyone.
- feel guilty about scheduled relaxing, exercising, or being at recreation with yourself, family, or friends.

Sample daily time plan sheet

Objectives for today: *Friday*

Activity	Priority	Time	Hrs.	Status
• Outline biochem reading. Take notes. Type Saturday.	2	8:30 a.m.	1.5	done.
• Meet with FAO (financial aid officer) about short-term loan.	2	10:15	1.0	done.
• Read NY Times to see what's going on in the world.	3	11:15	.5	done.
• Lunch with Admission Committee members, Ms. Wilson and Mr. Cooper.	2	noon	1.0	rescheduled.
• Respond to mother's letter.	4		.2	done. mail.
• Wash clothes.	4		1.0	
• Write health associations for membership applications.	4		.5	
• Listen to music or watch "20/20."	3	8 p.m.	1.0	

$P + I + U$

Priority equals *Importance* plus *Urgency*

2 = most important; must be done right away; must complete today

3 = very important; must be done soon; would like to complete today

4 = somewhat important; must be done sometime; can wait until tomorrow

Study Groups

In health professional school, students often share their technical, conceptual, interpersonal, and organizational skills to work in a cooperative and effective manner.

Suggestion

1. Reconize that study group teamwork requires trust, active listening, tolerance of diversity, and willingness to take risks. Team training is essential.
2. Define members' duties and responsibilities. Teamwork requires structure for the team to operate effectively.
3. Vary study groups and responsibilities according to subject, task, motivation, and growth.
4. Be explicit about the study group's objectives.
5. Encourage participation in decision-making and other group processes to increase member satisfaction.
6. Be organized. Team management can require more planning time, but will decrease wasted time.

Avoid the problem of:

Ineffective group processed and decision-making.

Unclear team member roles.

Stagnation and excessive power buildup.

Faddism and exorbitant claims for potential.
Feelings of powerlessness and lack of opportunity for individual input.
Surprise decisions and lack of adherence to study group deadlines and procedures.

Delegation within the study group

Suggestion	Avoid the problem of:
1. Identify your study group's major tasks.	No direction or understanding of task expectation.
2. Identify member interests and what each wants to accomplish within the following levels of involvement: • Leadership- wants to provide initiative by calling meetings, assigning work, and so forth, to get the job done. • Deciding- wants to participate in deciding tasks to be done. • Informed- wants to recieve information about decisions made, but does not want to participate directly. • Zero- wants no involvement.	Unclear roles and levels of interest in study groups activities.
3. Ask yourself the question, "What should my fellow students do?"	Few doing the work for many.
4. Take a risk; trust people to do tasks you delegate to them.	Doing everything yourself.
5. Learn from failure in delegated situations by evaluating mistakes.	Distrust and unwillingness to ever delegate again.
6. Monitor delegated task accomplishments regularly.	Last minute failure and crisis.
7. Encourage and support delegated decisions prepared by others.	Unwillingness to try future task.
8. Accept your responsibility to delegate. Recognize that it is not an easy task: • It takes time. • It takes practice. • It takes trust. • It will result in some mistakes. • Things may not be done the way you would have done them.	Everyone depending on you to get things done.

Organizing your desk and handling paperwork

1. Maintain a clean desk by working on one subject, project, or problem at a time. Keep everything else off your desk.
2. Use trays or baskets; have one for each purpose, such as the following:

Classification	Alternate classification
• *In.* For incoming materials. Empty it often. A quick glance tells whether it belongs in the immediate or attention basket (see below) or the wastebasket.	*Health professional school*
• *Immediate.* For high-priority papers.	*Bills*
• *Attention.* Not first priority but needs attention soon.	*Reading*
• *Out.* For all outgoing materials, marked as to where they go.	*File*

3. Use a tickler file: 3x5 cards or file folders. Organize by dated dividers. Make notes on the cards or on paper kept in the file folders to remind you of when to do tasks.
4. Set aside a regular time to go through your trays, baskets, and tickler file. You will soon develop a good habit that will help you keep abreast of all your activities.
5. Handle all papers only once! The possible exception would be sorting incoming

materials into categories as described above. Even then, a quick glance may tell you what needs to be done.

6. When deciding where to file something: "If in doubt, throw it out."
7. Don't fall into the trap of writing longhand. Use a typewriter or word processor. Typed notes are usually easier to read and comprehend. A portable will allow you to type at home, at study group meetings, or elsewhere.
8. If in doubt, phone instead of writing. Phone calls can cost less than writing, allow for interaction, and usually give you quicker results.
9. To establish responsibility for a specific task, put it in writing. Written confirmation costs little compared to the confusion and loss of time if someone misunderstands.
10. Handling reading material:
    - Read selectively.
    - Read rapidly (take a speed reading course).
    - Delegate reading to other study group members.
11. Answer some mail by entering responses in the margin and other empty space. If it is an important letter, photocopy the answered letter

for your files before returning it to the sender. (Also make copies of all your health professional school financial aid papers and correspondence.)

12. Research papers need not be long masterpieces. All you need to do is cover your subject well.

Discipline in Time Management

Effective management of time boils down to one word — *discipline*. Knowing the rules is one thing; applying them is another. Without disciplining yourself to follow the rules of time management, all the study in the world is too little or too late.

Assume for a moment you are in your first quarter of health professional school. It is 8:30 a.m. You are preparing to study for your first biochemistry exam tomorrow afternoon. It will take nearly a day to review all your accumulated notes and about another half-day to master all the major subject areas.

As you lay out your notes, you discover one important section is missing. Your eyes fall on a study-group memo outlining the topic missing in your notes. You recall that you missed the last study group because you went to a concert. You stop studying to go borrow a copy of the notes and, before you get out the door, you receive a call from your best friend about a party on Friday.

After discussing transportation possibilities, you leave in search of the missing notes, and as you pass the coffee shop, the financial aid officer motions for you to join her in a cup of coffee. The coffee break stretches into a 60-minute discussion of next year's

financial aid opportunities.

On the way again to the study group's meeting room, you glance at your watch. It is 10:15. You collect the notes but take an hour and 15 minutes to resolve a transportation problem for a friend. By the time you're done, it is almost time for a luncheon appointment with another friend. You take a few minutes alone to freshen up and relax.

"Oh yes, the notes. Well, I'll get to them after dinner tonight."

Now do you doubt what is wrong? How should you, the health professional student, have disciplined yourself to use your time effectively and avoid anxiety, poor test performance, or some other stress-related disease?

List some of the major mistakes in preparing for the day and handling the morning's activity.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

If you had just completed a seminar on time management, what are some of the things you would do to avoid having another morning like you have just undergone?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

Some guidelines for Time Management discipline

Some guidelines for time-management discipline

The following guidelines are for developing a disciplined approach to managing yourself and your time. Many ideas mentioned earlier in this manual are repeated to help reinforce that discipline is the key to time management.

1. Use a time log to keep track of how you use time daily for two weeks. Be absolutely honest with yourself. Include evening hours in your log.

   Note: Time logging may be painful because it reveals that we often waste up to 80 percent of the time we have for productive activity.

2. Plan tomorrow's work today. By planning tomorrow today, you will sleep better tonight. You should write tomorrow's workday plan in the form of objectives.
3. Determine when your best time of day is and plan to tackle the tough problems then.
4. Once you develop your workday plan, stick to the plan. Deviate only when an emergency dictates.

5. Discipline yourself. Avoid procrastination. Develop a do-it-now philosophy, but be sure to avoid the trap of trying to do two things at once.
6. Involve your peers in disciplining yourself to manage your time more effectively. They will appreciate your effort because it will help them manage their time better.
7. Involve your friends in your time management planning and let your professors know of your efforts. Revealing your goals adds discipline to your attempts to achieve them.
8. When you find your time being eroded by others, call on your mental discipline to put yourself back on track. Remind yourself of the hours of disciplined study, practice, and effort in which others have engaged to excel in their chosen fields, whether in medicine, law, theater, music, theology, management, sports, or something else.
9. Recite daily: "I am making progress in understanding how to manage my time.

Discipline makes champions. The effective use of time separates the great from the mediocre."

10. Remember, finally, that until you know yourself, until you determine what is important in your own life, and until you establish your goals, you cannot muster the discipline to direct yourself and you will not effectively manage the work activities of a health professional student.

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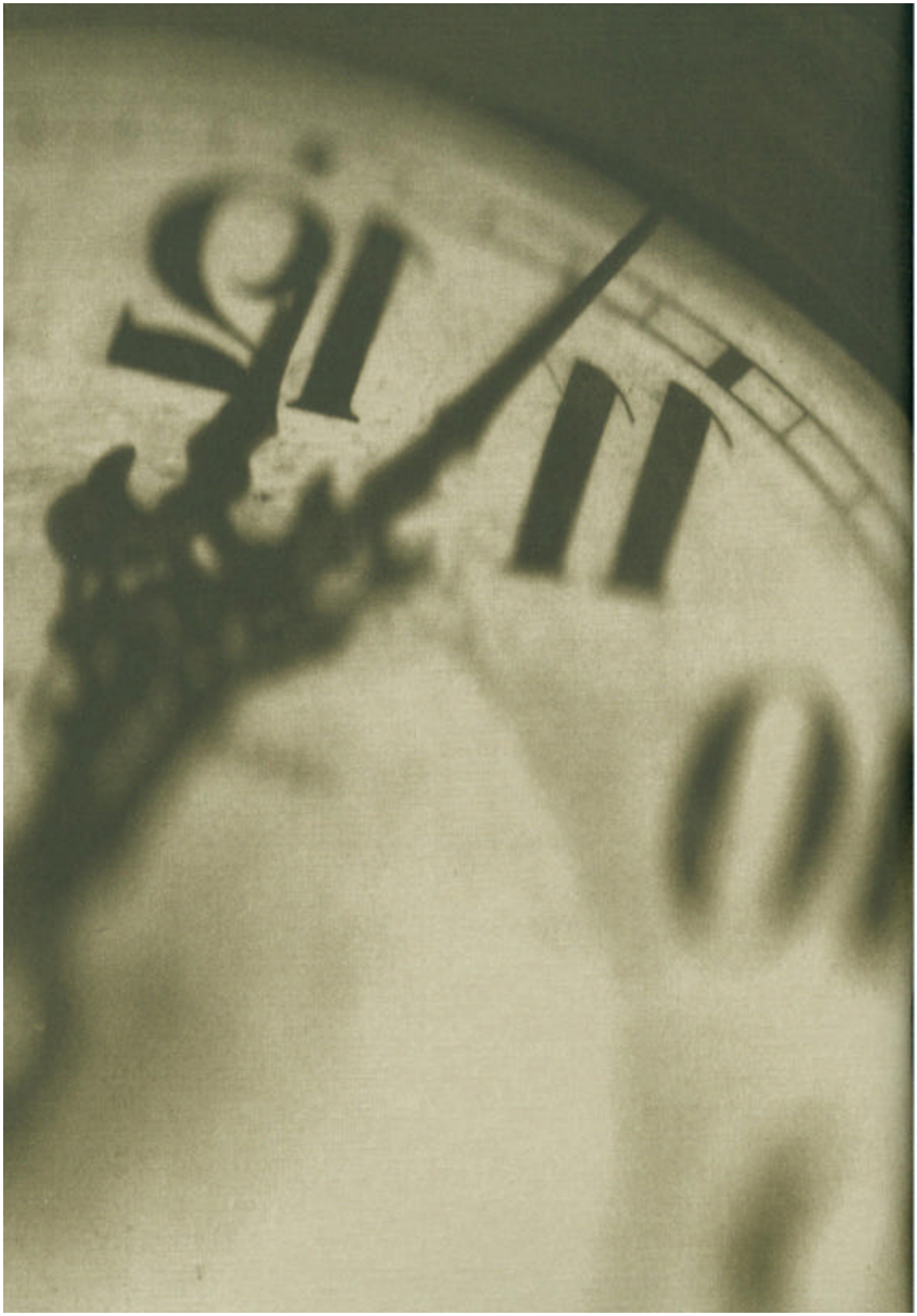
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