TIME MANAGEMENT, STRESS, AND BURNOUT

From: Student Clubs and Organizations Advisor Handbook 2004-2005

(Dean of Students, California State University Fullerton)
TIME MANAGEMENT, BURNOUT, & STRESS

Description of Time Management
At CSU, Fullerton, there are an incredible amount of things for students to do. There are classes to attend, studying to be completed, games to be played, fitness to be maintained, and of course, sleep. In order for organization members to “fit it all in” in their schedule, leaders and advisors are going to need to assist them in exercising good time management skills. Time management is an individual process and every person has different needs. How members manage their time actually depends on what they want to accomplish.

At certain times students can be flexible and plan their calendar as they progress. However, other times will be extremely busy as they attempt to juggle their courses around activities. The trick is to have them plan ahead so that they can avoid being overwhelmed when deadlines appear. If you assist them in practicing good time management while their schedule is light, when crunch time occurs the discipline of good time management will be second nature. The following pages include a self evaluation of current time management skills and helpful hints on improving time management.

The following pages will help begin the process of developing a time management plan that fits personal needs. Have students evaluate their current time management practices and determine what skills they would like to improve upon their new time management skills. They will be amazed at how much time there really is to do all the things on their “to do” list for the day. Just remind them: Proper preparation and planning prevents poor performance.
TIME MANAGEMENT FOR CLUB MEMBERS

“How procrastination is the thief of time.” – Edward Young

How are some people able to work so many different activities into their schedules while others barely seem to have the time to attend classes? Are they smarter? Doubtful. More organized? Maybe. Better at managing their time? Definitely!

TIME MANAGEMENT is important to any student, but particularly so to those involved in student organizations. Involvement in a co-curricular group means that in addition to classes, meals, jobs, and socializing, another significant chunk of your time is automatically taken when it comes to scheduling your day. This section will give some pointers on how to more efficiently manage one your most precious resources: TIME.

Note: Managing your time is a highly personalized skill -- only you know your peak work hours, your attention span, your eating and sleeping needs. This section will present general ideas necessary for successful time management and give specific examples of how these ideas might be applied. The important things are the IDEAS, not the applications. Whatever method works for you is the right one.

The three steps to efficient time management are:

1. Organizing
2. Prioritizing
3. Scheduling

The main idea is to be flexible in your planning. Disasters will come up and after all, we are only human. Allow for the unexpected. The only sure thing in a schedule is that the unexpected will always happen.

**Organizing**

Ideally, you should make a list each morning of everything that you want or need to do for that day. At this stage don’t plan out every minute. Don’t even think about which jobs are most important, just write down everything you can think of. Another method is to list tasks or “things to do’s” every 5-7 days. This helps to plan longer projects (i.e., more than one day). There may be days when you forget or just don’t feel like doing some things. Giving yourself more than one day at a time gives you more flexibility.

**Priorities**

The next step is to rewrite your list in order of priority, with the intention of doing the higher priority tasks first and working your way down the list. Much more of this will be done for you if you keep in mind the due dates for the different projects you’re working on. If the project is for a class, consider things such as how much of the final grade that particular project is worth (5% or 50%). How you prioritize is up to you. No one can tell you what is most important to you. Be responsible with your priorities.
HINTS: Don’t procrastinate! Don’t overestimate your capabilities; try not to leave projects for
the last second. All-night cramming will happen, but it is the least effective way of getting work
done. Try to keep the heavy duty late night studying to a minimum.

Scheduling
Now that you’ve got a prioritized list of everything that you need and want to do, you should
look at your set class/work schedule to fit your projects around what you already have scheduled
and can't change. You may want to do this for a few days at a time rather than every day.
Remember to let your schedule be flexible. Don’t get overly ambitious, there is no need to plan
out every minute of your day. Make a reasonable schedule which you can be sure to stick to.
Leave a room for breaks, socializing, and those little things that tend to pop up. A good habit to
develop is to use a calendar to mark your set schedule, projects, appointments, etc.

Following these three steps will help you use your time more effectively, and a little more time is
something we could all use!!
SELF EVALUATION OF TIME MANAGEMENT

1. Am I really in control my life?
2. Are my actions determined primarily by me, not by circumstances or by people’s priorities?
3. Do I have a clear and defined set of goals?
4. Do I have a clear idea of what I want to accomplish during the coming week?
5. Do I know my physical and mental prime time?
6. Do I schedule by priorities during my prime time?
7. Do I use an effective “list” system?
8. Do I make constructive use of between class time?
9. Do I have talking time with my friends and colleagues?
10. Do I get enough exercise?
11. Do I have set deadlines for myself and stick to them?
12. Am I punctual?
13. Do I force myself to take time to plan?
14. Do I make a time log to determine where and how my time is spent?
15. Do I have time to renew myself?
16. Do I get enough sleep?
17. Do I keep in mind those things I can do nothing about and not let them worry me?
18. Have I considered improving my current routines and patterns?
19. Do I tackle difficult and unpleasant tasks without procrastination?
20. Am I satisfied with my use of time?
TIME WASTERS EXERCISE

Read the following list of common time wasters. Place a check before your 3 to 5 biggest time wasters. If any of your biggest ones are missing, add them in the blank spaces at the bottom and include those in the 3 to 5 chosen.

_________ Interruptions, drop-in visitors, unplanned conversation
_________ Meetings, scheduled or unscheduled
_________ Lack of objectives, setting deadlines, setting priorities
_________ Cluttered desk, lost items, personal disorganization
_________ Doing routine things of minor importance
_________ Attempting too much at once
_________ Unrealistic time estimates
_________ Procrastination, indecision, daydreaming
_________ Inability to say “NO”
_________ Leaving tasks unfinished, jumping from one task to another
_________ Getting involved in unnecessary details
_________ Socializing, idle conversation
_________ Playing cards, games, etc.
_________ Lacking self-discipline, not carrying through on plans
_________ Constantly switching priorities.
_________ Failure to listen carefully to assigned tasks
_________ Failure to do first things first
_________ Failure to use short blocks of time constructively
_________ Breaks which turn into vacations
_________ Duplication efforts (having to start over/losing material/recording notes in form which don’t help, etc.)

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________
35 WAYS TO MANAGE YOUR TIME

1. Know your priorities
2. Set priorities.
3. Learn to say “NO.”
4. Keep meetings on the topic.
5. Think through a job before starting.
6. Be prepared for classes.
7. Avoid unnecessary interruptions.
8. Make a list of points to discuss before going to see a professor.
9. Have an organized filing system.
10. Begin meeting promptly.
11. Finish one homework assignment before beginning another.
12. Listen carefully.
13. Maintain a “To Do” list.
14. Realize when you are procrastinating and re-focus your concentration.
15. Discover your most creative time of the day.
16. Allow flexibility in your schedule for unexpected events.
17. Set deadlines for yourself.
18. Anticipate disruptions, have a back up plan!
19. Study where you will not be disturbed.
20. Don’t abuse the time of others.
22. Use specialist, professional staff, counselors and services to help with special problems.
23. Reward yourself for completing of projects.
24. Don't mistake activity for productivity.
25. Teach yourself how to concentrate.
26. Set aside quiet think time.
27. Know thyself. Be aware of your strengths and limitations.
28. Maintain balance between your work and leisure activities.
29. Avoid perfectionism.
30. Combine tasks whenever possible.
31. Take sufficient time to carefully weigh important decisions.
32. Do not dwell on unimportant decisions.
33. Periodically evaluate the usage of your time in relation to your life goals.
34. Write down important events, idea, dates in your calendar or notebook.
35. Learn to laugh at yourself.
MANAGING BURNOUT

Have you ever felt like you are working all the time but nothing ever seems to get done? Your assignments are piling up, you have a paper to write, a birthday present to buy for your roommate, you haven’t slept well in two days, you’re late for work on top of all that, friends from home are coming to visit this weekend. How did you get into this mess? Can you get out?

When you don’t manage your time wisely and/or do not feel appreciated, you can feel the effects of burnout. Burnout is the use of needless energy when your productivity is not enhanced. It is caused by perfectionism, low self confidence, fear of change, being disorganized, and ignoring personal needs. Being burned out is the result of not exercising good time management. It also is the result from ignoring the signals your body sends you regarding personal health. Burnout and stress can take many forms. They can be felt in a headache, heard in a tone of voice, or seen in a reaction. Expect to feel burnout and stress. They are normal parts of working hard for something you want. Just make sure you take care of yourself when you start to feel their effects.
## STAGES OF INVOLVEMENT: LEADING TO BURNOUT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotion</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enthusiasm</td>
<td>I can change the world!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frustration</td>
<td>Maybe if I work harder I can get everything done.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stagnation</td>
<td>I work all the time and nothing seems to be different.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apathy</td>
<td>I guess I don’t have much to contribute anyway.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resolution</td>
<td>I can’t change the world.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## STAGES OF INVOLVEMENT: AVOIDING BURNOUT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotion</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enthusiasm</td>
<td>I can work with others to change this aspect the world!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reassessment</td>
<td>This isn’t working the way I thought it would. What needs to be changed?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervention</td>
<td>I think we should continue in this manner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment</td>
<td>So how are things going now? What can be improved?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resolution</td>
<td>It’s great to see that things change and my involvement was valuable!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Question?**
Where do you fall in these states? How about the members of your group?
TWENTY WAYS TO DEAL WITH BURNOUT

1. Get up earlier to give yourself more time in the day.
2. Work smarter instead of harder.
3. Before you go to class, stop for a moment and look around outside.
4. Pay less attention to time and pace yourself.
5. Regulate how many things are put on your “to do” list.
6. Set realistic goals.
7. During meals don't talk about work and eat slowly.
8. Find a place on campus where you can sit quietly for five minutes.
9. Be willing to say “no” when you need to.
10. Ask for help.
11. Know the expectations of others.
12. Focus on small immediate goals.
13. Visit people who make you feel good.
14. Re-energize yourself through relaxation techniques.
15. Talk to a significant other.
16. Change your routine.
17. Pay attention to your diet and sleep. If you “don’t have time,” do you have time to get sick?
18. Exercise daily.
19. Know that you have choices and take control of your life.
20. Change your scenery.
STRESS

IMMEDIATE WAYS TO ALLEVIATE STRESS

Take a short walk
Breathe deeply
Exercise for a few minutes
Stretch your neck, back, legs and arms
Close your eyes and think of your favorite place
Change where you are working
Stand in front of the mirror and practice laughing
Mentally redefine the situation in less stressful terms
Put things into perspective
Make a “to do” list
Talk with a friend or staff member
Schedule complaint times
Take a break
Talk to your professor
Read a poem
STRESS MANAGEMENT: COPING METHODS

Look for causes
Who or what is at the bottom of the stress? Dealing directly with the person or issue may be the best approach. Know the limits of what you can do and avoid taking on more work than you can handle. Leave time enough for relaxing, sleeping, exercising, and volunteer work. Also, try not to make too many big changes in your life at the same time.

Examine your relationships
What can you do to put more warmth, communication, and mutual support into your relationships?

Evaluate
Not every argument is worth trying to win. Define values that are important to you, but learn to ignore lesser issues.

Relax from time to time
Schedule time to relax or do something you really enjoy. Don’t let anything interfere, especially worrying about what you’re not doing.

Take things one at a time
Don’t try to get everything done at once, determine what is most important and work to accomplish it. Then move on to other things. Make sure the goals you set for yourself are not too high.

Avoid irrational goals and expectations
Remember, not everyone must like you, you don’t have to be perfect! Personal expectations are best when within reasonable limits. Some circumstances are beyond your control, recognize your limits and the limitations of others.

Make single changes
While too many big changes at the same time may lead to immediate short term distress, the long term effect may actually be a lessening of stress. Changing your job, going back to college, or even ending a relationship may be in your long term interest. However, such changes should not be made without first giving them serious consideration.

Talk out your worries
Confiding in a trusted friend or trained professional may help to relieve your stress. Often, another person can help you get a new perspective on things that are bothering you.

Get enough rest
Lack of sleep can reduce your capacity to deal with stress. Know how much rest you need and see that you are getting it regularly.
DO YOU ACT OR REACT?

I walked with my friend, a Quaker, to the newsstand the other night, and he bought a paper, thanking the newsboy politely. The newsboy didn’t even acknowledge it.

“A sullen fellow isn’t he?” I commented.
“Oh, he’s that way every night,” shrugged my friend.
“Then why do you continue to be so polite to him?” I asked.
“Why not?” inquired my friend. “Why should I let him decide how I’m going to act?”

As I thought about this incident later it occurred to me that the important word was “ACT.” My friend acts toward people; most of us react toward them. He has a sense of inner balance which is lacking in most of us; he knows who he is, what he stands for, how he should behave. He refuses to return incivility, because then he would no longer be in command of his own conduct.

Nobody is unhappier than the perpetual reactor. His center of emotional gravity is not rooted within himself, where it belongs, but in the world outside him. His temperature is always being raised or lowered by the social climate around him, and he is a mere creature at the mercy of those elements.

Praise gives him a feeling of euphoria, which is false, because it does not last and it does not come from self-approval. Criticism depresses him more than it should, because it confirms his own secretly shaken opinion of himself. Snubs hurt him, and the merest suspicious of unpopularity in any quarter rouses him in bitterness.

Serenity cannot be achieved until we become master of our own actions and attitudes. To let another determine whether we shall be rude or gracious, elated or depressed, is to relinquish control over our own personalities, which is ultimately all we possess. The only true possession is self-possession.

Condensed from the Chicago Daily News
by Sidney L. Harr