How To Get More Studying Done In Less Time

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Where does your time go?

Run down this checklist of difficult points to find where time slips away.

1. **Do you lost time in getting started?** Many students have problems in getting down to the books even though they set aside time to study. A related problem is “getting warmed up”. Some students apparently require greater warm-up time than others. (For example, studying a foreign language – learning vocabulary, translating, and working exercises may require more time than reading through a history chapter as far as warm-up is concerned.)

   Determine the time period that you are most effective and most alert and attempt to schedule your study time then. Some students’ function better in the early morning while others are more effective late at night. Setting unreasonable goals like “I’ll get up at 6:30 a.m. on Saturday and start studying” makes for more difficulties. Do you put off studying by rationalizing the importance of other activities? (E.g., lingering over coffee too long, reading the morning paper during your breaks between class when the time might be better utilized in reviewing or preparing for lecture, or reading the newspaper too thoroughly – spending unnecessary hours whiling away the time and avoiding study.)

2. **Do you lose time through disorganization?** Are you uncertain as to what you’re going to accomplish in your study period? Do you try to handle too many kinds of activities, or cover too many different work problems for a given evening? Do you grab the first book that’s handy rather than systematically planning what you’re going to accomplish? Often it’s desirable to study the most difficult or boring courses first and then after you’ve completed your goals within a specified time, reward yourself by turning to the ones that you find more enjoyable.

3. **Do you lost time through diversion?** Do you sacrifice prime working time with personal diversions? OK, so you need to do your laundry but you do use the prime morning hours when you’re feeling freshest to do laundry vs. going to the laundromat after classes between 4 and 5 when you’re less likely to be motivated or alert?
4. **Do you lose time through excessive involvement?** Do you dig too deep into factual research and pursuit of details after having already obtained the important key facts? Do you know when to stop? If you are fatigued, it’s better to change to some other activity rather than to continue.

5. **Do you lose time in paper work?** Do you have trouble locating your notes and the books so that you can integrate reading with your lecture notes? Developing effective skimming and scanning techniques will enable you to get the major concepts from all of the books and then selectively decide which are necessary to study in depth or read more carefully.

6. **Do you make sample outlines for reports or term papers?** To get more writing done in the time available. Do you have an identifiable goal in writing the thesis you’re attempting to prove or the major concept in mind before you start writing? Do you get to the point, simply and directly?

7. In paper work, **do you eliminate work done out of habit which no longer serves a useful purpose?** For example, copying down from your textbook to your notebook all major terms or concepts and then retyping all your class notes may be a habit that takes too much of your time. Is it really necessary?

**Summary**

Time is the greatest asset of the college student. Time passes regardless of how it is used. Your challenge should be to obtain the greatest return from studying time by proper division and sequencing of tasks. More effort should be spent on organizing and preparing your objectives and tasks, creative work and productive work. Each of these must be balanced or your productivity will suffer. To increase your productive study time then, you have to accomplish the detailed indirect activities more quickly and effectively and eliminate time slippage in all activities.