Putting Things Into Perspective

Where is your time going?

1. Number of hours of sleep each night   _____ X 7 = _____

2. Number of grooming hours per day   _____ X 7 = _____

3. Number of hours for meals/snacks
    per day – include preparation time   _____ X 7 = _____

4. Total travel time each weekday   _____ X 5 = _____

5. Total travel time on weekends   _____

6. Number of hours per week for regularly scheduled
    functions (clubs, church, get-togethers, etc.)   _____

7. Number of hours per day for chores, errands,
    extra grooming, etc.   _____ X 7 = _____

8. Number of hours of work/internship per week   _____

9. Number of hours in class per week   _____

10. Number of average hours per week socializing,
    dates, TV, web surfing, etc. Be honest!   _____

Now add up the totals: _____

Subtract your total from 168   168 – _____ = _____

*The remaining hours are the hours
you have allowed yourself to study.*

(SOURCE: Unknown)

TIME MANAGEMENT[11]

As you know, or will soon find out with the numerous amounts of papers, group projects, and additional assignments, time management skills are critical! Below you will find information about creating Prioritized To-Do Lists, Scheduling, Goal Setting, and Ending Procrastination.

Creating To-Do Lists/Prioritizing

Keeping a To-Do List helps you get organized, which is essential to balancing the demands of the MSW program, and minimizing stress. When creating a To-Do List, make sure to capture all of the tasks you have to complete.

Another important aspect of keeping a To-Do list is prioritizing your work. By prioritizing work, you plan the order in which you'll do things, so you can tell what needs your immediate attention, and what you can quietly forget about until much later. Keep in mind that a To-Do list varies from person to person. A To-Do list can be daily or weekly, choose one that best suits you.

Preparing a To-Do List is a three-step process:

1. Start by writing down the tasks that face you, and if they are large, break them down into smaller pieces.
2. Review jobs and allocate priorities from A (very important) to F (unimportant). If too many tasks have a high priority, run through the list again and downgrade the less important ones.
3. Rewrite the list in priority order. Now you will be able to tackle these in order of importance. This allows you to separate important jobs from the many time-consuming unimportant ones.

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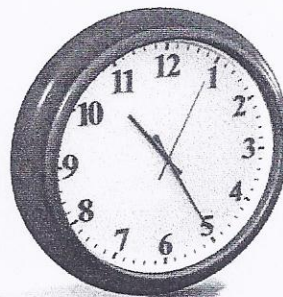
[11] Mind Tools (2007). *Essential skills for your excellent career.* Retrieved June 28, 2007 from, http://www.mindtools.com/

Scheduling

Effective scheduling is one of the most important time management skills you can use! Scheduling is the process by which you plan the use of your time. In order to schedule efficiently, you need an effective scheduling system. There are a variety of options to choose from including a dairy, calendar, planner, PDA, or software such as MS Outlook. CTools also has a calendar function! Keep in mind that self-care should be scheduled into your time.

Scheduling is then a five-step process:

1. Identify the time you have available.
2. Block in the essential tasks you must carry out.
3. Schedule in high priority urgent tasks and vital "house-keeping" activities.
4. Block in appropriate time to handle unpredictable situations, events and/or circumstances.
5. In the time that remains, schedule the activities that address your priorities and personal goals.

Goal Setting

Goal setting is a powerful process for personal planning that can ease the stress of the MSW program. The process of setting goals helps you figure out what you want to achieve. By knowing what you want to achieve, you know where you must concentrate your efforts.

The following broad guidelines will help you to set effective goals:

Be precise: Set a specific goal, recording dates, times and amounts so that you can measure your progress.

Set priorities: If you have several goals, give each a priority. This helps you to avoid feeling overwhelmed, and helps you to focus on the most important ones.

Write goals down: This crystallizes them and gives them more power.

Keep goals small: Keep the goals you are working towards small and achievable. If a goal is too large, then it can seem that you are not making progress towards it. Keeping goals small and incremental gives more opportunities for reward, thus making you feel more accomplished.

Set realistic goals: It is important to set goals that you can achieve.

Ending Procrastination

There is no time for procrastination while getting your MSW! Time flies by so quickly, so don't wait until Thanksgiving break to start your Fall semester assignments. You must try to minimize or end your procrastinating ways early! So to overcome procrastination you must first recognize that you're doing it, then figure out why, and lastly get over it!

Step 1: Recognize that you're procrastinating
If you're honest with yourself, you'll be able to know when you're procrastinating

Below are some common warning signs:
- Filling your day with low priority tasks from your To-Do list
- Immediately going to get coffee or check emails when sitting down to start a high-priority task
- Leaving an item on your To-Do list from a long time even though you know it is important
- Saying "yes" to unimportant task that others ask you to do to fill your time with these instead of completing your important tasks

Step 2: Figure out why you're procrastinating

The two common reasons for procrastination are:
1. Finding the task unpleasant
2. Finding the task overwhelming

If you are putting off a task because you just don't want to do it you need to find ways of motivating yourself. The following approaches can be helpful:

- Make your own rewards. For example, promise yourself a trip to the mall or a tasty snack if you complete a certain task
- Ask someone else to check up on you. Peer pressure works!
- Identify the negative consequences of NOT doing the task

If you're putting a task off because it is overwhelming here are some tips:
- Break the project into a smaller, more manageable tasks
- Start with some quick small tasks even if these are not the logical first actions. This will make you feel as though you are achieving things, and perhaps the whole project won't be so overwhelming