Stress Management through Time Management

As a student or post-doc, you may find that there is never enough time to get everything done. All of the responsibilities of school, work, family and friends, can be enjoyable but taken together, may begin to feel stressful. Learning to manage your time is a great way to learn to balance all your responsibilities while also helping you to reduce your stress.

Here are some simple strategies to improve your time management:

First, find a method to record your schedule. If you prefer paper, the UNC Bookstore has many different types of calendars and planners. If you prefer electronic, choose an option that can be easily accessed through any internet supported device.

Making a Master Schedule

- Block out exam times and any other fixed time commitments, such as work or organizational meetings.
- Block out time for the basics of daily living, i.e., eating, sleeping, personal maintenance, and travel.
- Plan and block out study time for each final test or paper.
- Plan at least one hour blocks for study and schedule large blocks of time for accomplishing major projects.
- Know your high energy and "down" times during the day and use them wisely.

Making To Do Lists

Sit down and list all of the things you need to get done in the upcoming week. You may want to assign tasks to given days of the week if you have a tight schedule. Be sure to check your month calendar to plan ahead for large tasks. Many electronic calendars allow you to incorporate a tasks list with your calendar. If you are using paper it may be beneficial to write your tasks under the day they need to be completed.

Prioritize Tasks

For each item on your list, apply the following "test:" Is this something I must get done,
should get done, or could complete? Assign each task to a category according to its priority. You can use a (1),(2),(3) system; an A, B, C arrangement; or M, S, C (for Must, Should, Could). You may even want to assign times to the "1's" if you have a very hectic day ahead.

Review your list at the end of the day. Reward yourself for tasks completed on schedule and make any adjustments needed during the rest of the week.

The Learning Center offers classes and coaching related to Time Management [1].

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Links