



Using a planner: The essentials

Feel like there aren't enough hours in the day to accomplish everything you want to do? Here are some tips and strategies for making the most of your time and making a plan for getting it all done.

The Five B's

1. Break things down

Break a large tasks into smaller, more manageable chunks.

2. Back-planning

Start with the final deadline, determine how long each component of the assignment will take you to complete, and then plan backwards.

3. Be specific

To be efficient, be specific with your plan. Writing "Biology, Chapter 8: Problems 22-26" is far more useful than writing "Study biology."

4. Be strategic

Try mapping out your alertness levels throughout the day to get a better sense of when you work best. Also consider how long you can focus on a topic before you need a break. We recommend regular 15-minute breaks for every 45 minutes of focused work.

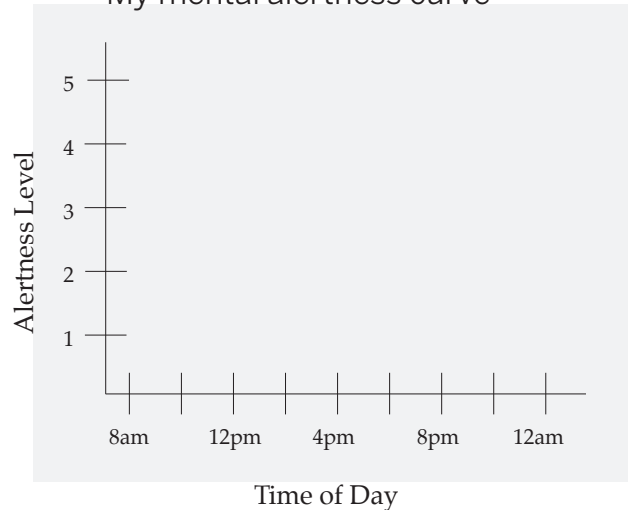
5. Balance

Leave space for the unexpected, and include breaks throughout the day to avoid burnout. Aim for a balance between your social and academic life as you create your plan.

Other scheduling tips

- Schedule short periods of time to preview and review course material throughout the week. Avoid study marathons!
- Use a deadline calendar to see an entire semester at a glance. Be mindful of busy weeks in the semester and plan accordingly.
- Use a reward system. Put tasks you normally put off right before something you enjoy so you're more motivated to complete the task.

My mental alertness curve



Does your planner look like a to-do list?

To-do lists can be a great organization tool, but tasks can easily roll from one day to the next.

By assigning your task to a specific time, you're more likely to accomplish it.