



5 habits of effective students

For many, college is an exciting experience but also an overwhelming one. This handout (adapted from “The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People” by Stephen Covey) offers advice on how to get the most out of your time as a student.

Be proactive

You always have the freedom to choose. Realizing what you’re in control of and focusing on those things can empower you. Take the initiative to go after your interests. Rather than simply reacting automatically to a situation, take a moment to decide how you want to respond. This can help you when you’re feeling overwhelmed or stressed.

Put your big rocks first

One of the biggest challenges of transitioning to college is learning to manage your time. UT has organizations, institutions, and events geared towards wide variety of interests, but it’s not possible to take on every opportunity available.

It’s okay to say no sometimes in order to focus on your highest priorities. What matters most to you? Tackle those things first. You’ll manage your time better and feel more fulfilled at the end of the day. If you find this challenging, see our handouts on “Time black holes” and “Be strategic with your time” handouts.

Begin with the end in mind

Start each day, task, or project with a clear vision of the end result. You might realize that what you’re striving for is a bit unrealistic or maybe too easy to accomplish. See our “SMART goals” handout which can help guide you in this process.

Become a groupie

Get involved in groups or make one on your own. Everyone stands to benefit when people bring different experiences and expertise to the table. If a group is hard to find, a partner can serve in the same way. Forming groups or partnerships can help you not only in your classes, but also with finding your niche here at the university through organizations and extra-curricular activities.

Find a balance

To stay happy and healthy, it’s important to balance the various areas of your life. Whether it’s joining an intramural soccer team, seeing a concert with friends, visiting Barton Springs, or making a biology study group, all students have their own ways of getting physical, social, spiritual, and mental fulfillment.

Finding an equilibrium among all your interests can be hard, but it will keep you from burning out. As previously mentioned, putting your big rocks first can help you keep priorities straight and feel satisfied at the end of each day. If you’re still struggling with striking an equilibrium, check out our “Setting Priorities” handout.