

Time Management

Goals, Objectives, Priorities, Scheduling



Goals are the things you are working toward accomplishing, usually over a period of time. Some examples of job goals might be to maintain a full work load of clients in your program, to have all your clients graduate from the program, or to teach all clients in groups.

In order to accomplish your long term goals, you have to make and carry out short term plans for activities or short term objectives. Think of these activities or objectives as steps along the way to a goal.

To decide which are the right activities for achieving your goals, you must:

1. List the possible activities for each goal.
2. Set priorities so you can select the best thing to do now. Setting priorities means you decide which thing to do first, second, third, and so on.

Make a List

Get a pencil and paper and write down different activities that will help you reach your goal. List as many as you can.

Think It Through

What are the advantages and disadvantages of each possible action?

Make a Decision

Do not put things off just because you do not have all the information you might like or because there is no perfect solution. Choose the best and keep moving toward your goal.

Develop a Schedule

Figure out as best as you can how much time is needed to accomplish each of your objectives. Then plan a time schedule, you will soon see you cannot get everything done in a day. That is where your priorities come in. Start your schedule with the top priority activity. Each work day, look down your list and check off things as you accomplish them.

Time as a Resource

Each day, every person has the same amount of time. How we use our time affects the goals we achieve and the satisfaction we experience. We often hear the expression, "Time is money." This is true for many people, because they can spend their time (and energy) to earn money.

"Time is life." Once your time is gone, there is no way you can get it back to use over. Your use of time contributes more to the quality of your life than how long you live or how much money you have.

Attitudes Toward Time

In most parts of American society, people think about time as a resource, similar to money and energy. We talk about spending time, saving time, wasting time, and measuring time. Time is a resource because it is scarce. When an hour or day is gone, there is no way to get it back.

In some cultures and communities people do not look at time in the same way. People may eat when hungry or sleep when they are tired, regardless of clock time. "Right now" or "today" may be much more important than the future for some people.

These people need help if they want to hold jobs or do other things where it's important to observe rules about time.

People are different in how well they can estimate time. Some people seem to have a natural sense of time. They can wake up in the morning without an alarm clock. They can accurately judge how long they have been working or reading or visiting. Other people have to depend on clocks and other reminders to help them judge the passage of time.

Time goes fast when you are enjoying yourself or working hard at something you like to do.

Time As A Resource, cont.

Saving Time

We do not really save time, because once the minutes or hours have passed by, they are gone forever. When we say we want to save time, we mean that we want to reduce the amount of time spent on certain activities and "save time to use for other things."

This means that we need to decide what we really want to do or accomplish. We call this setting priorities or putting first things first.

On the Job

Before you start a project, think through what you are going to do and what tools or equipment or printed materials you need. Write everything down on paper so you will not forget. Check it off before you leave home. Get everything.

Plan your teaching visits to different places, so you do not do a lot of back tracking. Go to the place that is nearest, then the next nearest, then the farthest. For example, do not go to the midpoint, then back to the nearest, and then on to the farthest.

If you are making visits to different agencies as part of your job, try to schedule them in a way to reduce your driving time. This saves your time. It saves gas for your car.

When Does "No" mean "Yes"



Most people find it hard to say "no" when someone asks them for help, or to go visiting or shopping or take part in another activity. Yet we all have more things to do than we have time for. You should work at teaching yourself to say

"no," to the things that are the least important to you. Sometimes you can make it easier on yourself by thinking of it this way. When you say "no" to one thing, you are saying "yes" to another. If you say "no," you cannot work on a church committee this month, you are saying "yes" to something else, such as giving more time to someone in your family.

When you are starting a new job or working very hard on your regular job, it is important to have time for yourself, family and friends. Look at this time as necessary time, just as time for eating and sleeping and personal care is necessary.

Do It Now



We think about planning use of time during a day or week or for a year.

But what about the daily decisions you have to make. If we tried to plan all these, we'd never do anything but make lists of things to do!

At these times, just ask yourself "What would be the best use of my time right now?"

Never sit and worry about what you have to do. If a job is bothering you so much that you are worrying about it, get up and get it done!

Why Manage Time?

- To accomplish what must be done on the job, during your working hours.
- To allow time to do what you need to do to become a more productive employee.
- To avoid having your job interfere with home and leisure activities.

Time is a Scarce Resource

- Everyone has just 24 hours a day.
- People who manage their time well get more done—both at work and at home.
- Don't waste your time.
 - most of us spend 80% of our time on unimportant things that produce only 20% of the results.
 - once an hour or a minute is gone, you can never get it back.
 - We do not really manage time, we learn to manage ourselves to make better use of the time we do have.

Make Minutes Count!

- There is no magic formula to give you more time.
- You can gain time to do important things if you make each minute count.
- You can become more efficient on your job and save some time on a variety of tasks. These minutes add up.
- If you can save 15 minutes a day that is an hour and a quarter a week, or five hours a month. If you are working halftime that is more than one work day!
- The time you have saved instead of wasted, can be used to do your job better.

Take Time to Make Time

Organize Your Attitude

- Enjoy what you do.
- Be optimistic.
- Build on your successes.
- Do not waste time fretting over failures.
- Do not waste time feeling guilty about what you do not do.
- Try to understand your job better.

Organize Yourself

- Give up "waiting time." In your job use it to do paperwork, contact, check the prices of grocery items, etc. In your personal life, consider it a "gift of time" to relax or do something you would not otherwise have done.
- Keep long term goals in mind while doing the smallest task.
- Set deadlines for yourself and others.
- Try not to waste other people's time.
- Start group meetings on time

Organize Your Day

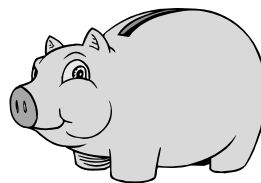
- Make daily time plans; allocate some time daily to long-run projects. Avoid dealing only with crises. Recognize that planning takes time but saves time in the end.

Organize Your Work

- Break up jobs into small parts. Set goals for completion of each part and goals for completing the whole project.
- Make lists of things to do and revise list daily.
- Keep a list of long-range projects that need to be done.
- Keep a calendar of who you are going to see and when. Help clients to keep a calendar too.
- Set time limits to accomplish certain jobs.

- **Make and Use a "Things To Do" List**—Use a check list for supplies, lesson plans. Confirm your appointments, but have a plan for using time if an appointment is cancelled.
- **Concentrate**— This is a most basic principle; do not try to do too many things at once. Try to concentrate on one thing at the time.
- **Take Breaks**—Energy declines after long periods of sustained work and stress.
- **Avoid Clutter**—This hinders concentration, creates tension. Keep materials well organized. Review the materials often to know what you have.
- **Do Not Be A Perfectionist**—To seek perfection results in frustration and nerves; to seek excellence results in attainment and gratification.
- **Do Not Be Afraid To Say No**—This is a most effective technique of time saving. Saying "no" to one thing means saying "yes" to another, more valuable one.
- **Do Not Procrastinate**—Begin to change at once, but one thing at a time. If you put things off ask yourself "what am I avoiding?"
- **Cut Out Time Wasters**—Time wasting activities drain off energy.
- **Delegate**—Involve clients by delegating responsibility to them to obtain certain items or perform various tasks that help you give better lessons.
- **Do Not Be A Workaholic**—Even if you must work long hours, do not let work constantly interfere with family and friends. Schedule time for rest, leisure, and social activities.

Each Day is a New Account



If you had a bank that credited your account each morning with \$86.0000, that carried over no balance from day to day, allowed you to keep no cash in your account, and every evening canceled whatever part of the amount you had failed to use during the day...what would you do?

Draw out every cent every day, of course, and use it to your advantage. Well, you have such a bank . . . and its name it "TIME."

Every morning, it credits you with 86,400 seconds. Every night, it rules off as lost whatever of this you have failed to invest to a good purpose. It carries over no balances. It allows no overdrafts. Each day, it opens a new account with you. Each night, it burns the records of the day. If you fail to use the day's deposits, the loss is yours. There is no going back. There is no drawing against the "Tomorrow." It is up to each of us to invest this precious fund of hours, minutes and seconds in order to get from it the utmost in job performance and personal happiness.

How to Manage Time



We've all heard the saying, "Plan your work and work your plan." This is so true! One of the most effective ways to manage your time is to plan your time and then stick to the

plan! It's also very important to only use one system for planning your entire life. This way, you don't have to say, "Oh, that's in my other bag." Keep everything together and always with you, and your life will already be more organized.

Planning Your Plan

You should take time to schedule a week or two at a time, but be consistent. If you plan by the week, then plan every week. If you plan by the two-weeks, then plan every two weeks. Stick to the same day to schedule in the same place. Make planning a weekly habit.

In addition to weekly planning, you should also plan daily. The last 15 minutes of every day should be spent planning the following day. The first 15 minutes of every day should be spent reviewing the plan for the day. For example, on Monday afternoon, plan Tuesday. On Tuesday morning, look at the plan for the day to not everything you have to do.

Planning Ahead

As appointments and tasks come up, assign them to the day you have to do them. Use an appointment calendar with times for appointments and a list for tasks. You should also plan ahead for things you have to do. For example, you're at a meeting with agency personnel on November 5. You have to call the manager of that agency in two weeks to verify that you can hold a class there. You write down the name and phone number and a few other notes. Now, go to November 19 (two weeks from the 5) and write, "Contact Ms. Smith (11/5/03)" This tells you what you need to do and where to find the information, so you don't have to write it twice.

Tasks and Appointments—What's the difference?

TIME is the difference here. Appointments are time-specific. That is, there is a specific time you have to be at an appointment. Tasks are time-flexible. That is, you can perform a task any time during the day.

As easy as ABC and 123

When you are planning, rank your tasks as to how important they are.

- A—vital. This must be done today.
- B—important. This should be done today, but it doesn't have to be.
- C—optional. This can be done whenever.

Now assign a number. This helps you to determine what order to get it done. First, rank all of the A items, beginning with 1. Then rank all the B items, beginning with 1. Do the same for C items. Throughout the day, you should first do all of your A tasks, then B and C, in the order you ranked them.

Finishing the Job

Use this system to let you know where tasks stand on being completed.

- Check mark—"I did it." Task completed.
- Circle—"I'm doing it." Task in progress.
- Arrow—"I'm going to do it." Plan this appointment ahead to when you are going to do it. See above for information.
- X—"I'm not going to do it."
- Circle with an initial—"Mr. Jones will do this." Task delegated.

Do a Checkup



Evaluation should be a regular part of your job, not just one big scary conference each year. You need to check up on yourself often enough to make sure you are spending your time doing the right things.

Keep track of where your time is going. You will be on track if most of your time is going toward meeting the goals you set to make your work more productive.

Note your accomplishments. What things show that your time is well spent and your job well done. Note your problems, too, so next time you can try a different method to achieve your goal.

Schedule Time to Meet Your Goals



Wishing doesn't bring accomplishments.

Working efficiently does. Your work as an Extension Program Assistant is important and valuable.

To do it well, be realistic in estimating the time it takes to do each part of the job well. Do not expect to do 40 hours of work in a day! Look for trouble spots. We all have some jobs that seem to take longer than they should. Sometimes practice helps work go more rapidly. Sometimes you may have to study or plan some in advance. Sometimes you have to get help from your co-workers or your supervising agent.

Use your "Things To Do" list, your notebook, and your calendar to keep on track.

Working with groups of clients is another way to work with more clients in the same amount of time. Be sure to get yourself organized beforehand, so you do not waste their time. Ten people in a one hour meeting equals ten hours of time. That's too much to waste!

If you still find you have more to do than you can find time for, think about getting some help. Delegating some parts of the job to other people, such as your clients, can help you. Delegating usually works best if you make sure the person is committed to doing the job, understands clearly what must be done, and is free to do it in her own way.

Putting things off, especially unpleasant things, can really be a problem during the action stage. Worrying drains energy away and this wastes time. If you have an unpleasant job to do, get up and get it done.

Commitment is vital to success. If you do not care about what you are doing, it is almost impossible to maintain interest, energy, and enthusiasm.

Learn to communicate clearly with your clients and with your supervising agent. Remember that communication is a two way process. Talking and listening are both important.

Much time is lost because people do not quite understand exactly what is expected. Ask questions yourself and give time for others to ask questions.

Activity 1: How Do You Use Your Time Now?

Directions: These are statements about how people might feel about time management problems. There is no right or wrong answer. Check the column that best describes your feelings.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I feel frustrated because I can't get all my work done during my regular hours.					
I find it difficult to decide how much time to spend on each part of my job.					
I think keeping a daily list of things to do is one of the most useful time management strategies.					
My attitude makes very little difference in how much I can accomplish, because I only have 24 hours a day.					
I have very little control over the amount of time I spend giving a lesson to one of my clients.					
Learning to manage my time really means learning to manage myself.					
I think evaluation or checking up is a waste of time because each new situation is different.					
I think helping families with personal problems is more important than teaching my planned lesson.					
The first step toward improving my time management is to get up and get busy and get my paper work all caught up.					

Directions: Check the column that shows the extent to which you carry out the following activities as part of your job.

	Almost Always	Usually	Sometimes	Rarely	Almost Never
I make and use a daily list of things to do.					
I fill out my mileage report right after each trip.					
If no one comes to a group meeting, I go home or stop and have coffee until time for my next visit.					
I work during the lunch hour in order to stay on schedule.					
I start a task without first thinking it through.					
I put off doing paper work and other tasks I dislike.					
I keep a weekly list of things to do.					
I make notes of each group immediately after the meeting.					
I work extra hours when it's time to turn in reports.					
I plan each day's work in advance.					
I check up on myself and my activities to see what program I am making.					

Activity 2: How Do You Feel About Time?

There are times when minutes seem to go by very fast. At other times you'll find time passing very slowly. How quickly or slowly time seems to pass depends on what you're doing—write down what you are doing when time goes slowest and when it passes quickest.

BE TRUTHFUL

Time Seems to Go Quickest When

At Work

In My Personal Life

Time Seems to Go Quickest When

At Work

In My Personal Life

Activity 3: Control of Time

In order to effectively **use** time we must be able to determine the degree of control we have of various situations or aspects of our work. It does not help very much to just sit and complain about parts of your job. It will help you get more done if you work more on the things you can control.

Directions: Check the degree of control you have over these various aspects of your work.

Control means whether you, the program assistant, are the one that directs the final action.

Make your selection based on your situation at the present time. Check one category in each of the "Degree of Control" columns.

	A Lot	Some	A Little	None	Comments/Notes
Making contact visits					
Enrolling new clients					
Client doesn't come to class					
Client moves					
Consistent meeting space at agency					
Clients not interested					
Lesson taught to client					
Teaching methods used					
Your schedule for the week					
To schedule client classes					
Reminding clients about class					
Your travel schedule					
Reports required					
Limitation of teaching only nutrition & nutrition related subjects					

Activity 4: The Time of Millie's Life

Direction: Read this case study and try to identify Millie's problems in managing her work time. The group will list the problem, their causes, their effects, and we'll discuss some possible solutions.

Millie Smith is an extension Program assistant. She has a group meeting scheduled at the Anytime Florida housing project. She arrived a little early to get everything set up and ready for the group session. Today she was doing a demonstration of eggplant casserole and each client was to bring some of the ingredients. When the starting time came, Sarah came with her infant daughter. Millie admired the baby and they chatted about the weather and living conditions in the housing project. Sarah had only moved in the project last month and really did not know any of her neighbors. Thirty minutes passed and no other clients came. Millie tried to decide what to do...there was only one client and there were no ingredients to make the egg-

plant casserole. Sarah indicated that she could only stay for 15 more minutes because her husband would be coming home. Millie decided to pack-up her materials and leave. She told Sarah that she hoped she would come back next week for the group meeting. Since the meeting was cut short, Millie had an extra hour and a half to fill in her day. Millie decided to drive around in the housing project and see if any of the clients were at home. She did see Rosa who graduated from the program last year. Rosa asked Millie if he had any new recipes she could share. Millie stopped and shared some recipes and caught up on Rosa's family. The hour and a half passed quickly and it was time for Millie to head home.

Based on what you know about managing time and making an impact on clients, what problems do you think Millie has in managing her time?

What caused each of these problems?

What are some possible solutions?

Activity 5: Managing Each Part of Your Job

Check the areas in which you feel you can improve (no matter how small this improvement). Then, circle the ones you would like to work on in the next six months.

TRAVEL

- _____ 1. Plan travel to agencies in the same area.
- _____ 2. Find the best routes to agency sites.
- _____ 3. Get commitment from clients to be at group meetings.
- _____ 4. Remind clients of group meeting.
- _____ 5. Keep your car in running condition.
- _____ 6. _____

REPORTS

- _____ 1. Complete Plan and Activity Report as work is performed.
- _____ 2. Complete other reports regularly.
- _____ 3. Write legibly.
- _____ 4. Do not recopy reports.
- _____ 5. Try to understand the relationship of one report to another.
- _____ 6. Keep records organized in a special place.
- _____ 7. _____

PREPARATION TO TEACH

- _____ 1. Take time to feel comfortable with lessons and use them over and over.
- _____ 2. Keep materials organized in a usable system.
- _____ 3. Know what materials you have.
- _____ 4. _____

PRESENTING LESSONS TO GROUPS

- _____ 1. Establish quick rapport with clients.
- _____ 2. Let the clients know you have a schedule.
- _____ 3. Involve children.
- _____ 4. Give clients assignments
- _____ 5. Check on results of assignments at the next meeting.
- _____ 6. Learn to use flip charts, and similar materials skillfully.
- _____ 7. Use a checklist to be sure you have everything you need for the day.
- _____ 8. Get a commitment from the client.
- _____ 9. Try to work with two or more clients at one time.
- _____ 10. _____

TRAINING

- _____ 1. Pick up all supplies when attending training.
- _____ 2. Learn as much as you can about your job.
- _____ 3. Ask questions to be sure you understand.
- _____ 5. _____

REFERRING CLIENTS

- _____ 1. _____
- _____ 2. _____
- _____ 3. _____

RECRUITING VOLUNTEERS

- _____ 1. _____
- _____ 2. _____
- _____ 3. _____

OTHER

- _____ 1. _____
- _____ 2. _____
- _____ 3. _____

Activity 6: Your Goals in Improving Your Time Management

What are some things that you plan to do in the next six months that will help you to manage your time better and get more done?

IMMEDIATELY

OVER THE NEXT SIX MONTHS

Activity 7: Some Time Wasting Habits

At home, do you:

- Rise late?
- Linger in bed before getting up?
- Forget to prepare the night before?
- Read the paper in the morning?
- Linger over an extra cup of coffee at breakfast?

After leaving home, do you:

- Stop off to talk before you reach your first appointment?
- Take your morning coffee before starting?
- Do personal work before doing your livelihood work?
- Read newspapers, magazine, unimportant reports and information documents the first thing?

Throughout the day, do you:

- Talk a lot between jobs?
- Start slowly because of lack of interest?
- Procrastinate because of other interests?
- Start a task without first thinking it through?

Activity 9: Time Analysis Worksheet

In what areas am I spending too much time?

Where can I adjust to save the most time?

What am I doing that may not need to be done at all?

Can I think of ways that I can avoid overusing the time of others?

Where am I spending too little time?

What are other ways I can save time?

What am I doing that could be done by others?

How will I use saved time?