

# PSYCAD TIP SHEET

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## Time Matters!



UNIVERSITY  
OF  
JOHANNESBURG

Being a university student is exciting! There is a lot to do and many people to meet. However, all of this will require a lot of your time as well. So it is important to ensure that you are organised and become a master at managing your time. The last thing you need is to feel like there are not enough hours in the day to be the best you can be. So let's start by checking where you're at. Look at the statements below and tick the ones that apply to you.

➔ **Do you:**

- Run out of time to complete important tasks?
- Spend too much time on other things besides academics?
- Get distracted by everything you have to do?
- Feel disorganised and "all over the place"?
- Have too many items on your to-do list?
- Feel you only perform when you are under time pressure?
- Struggle to keep up with your work load and other responsibilities?
- Feel under pressure when test/exam time comes around?

**If you have answered yes for more than one item, try some of these time management tips to assist you in being your best:**

## **BECOME AWARE OF WHAT REQUIRES YOUR TIME**

- Sit down and write down all of the tasks and responsibilities that require your time every day.
- Include your academics (time spent in class, tutorials, studying, consultations).
- Also include time spent with family and friends, taking part in hobbies and also your rest and relaxation time.

In determining this, you can allocate your time appropriately. **Most** of your time as a university student should be spent on your academics (about **6** hours a day). Review and re-arrange your time spent if this is not the case.

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***The bad news is Time Flies.  
The good news is You're the Pilot.***

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## **SET GOALS**

We often waste time when we do not make it clear what we will use that time to achieve. When it comes to academics or studying, you need to **set goals** for time spent.

- Make sure you set aside enough time to reach your stated goals.
- It can help to not only write your goals down but to state what the benefits of achieving them will be.
- Make sure your goals are *Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant* and Time-bound (**SMART**).
- Breaking goals down into baby steps can also help make them more manageable.
- Having goals can help you to allocate your time better.

## **PRIORITISE**

As a university student you will find that **your academics need to be a priority** if you are to keep on track.

- Prioritise the most difficult, time-consuming tasks so that you attend to these first. You'll have more motivation and energy.
- The most urgent tasks should also be done first.
- Following this, prioritise all your other demands and responsibilities as appropriate.
- Your priorities will change from time to time so be flexible when you need to.

## **CREATE A TO-DO LIST**

This is one of the best ways to manage what you need to do. Whether you make a *daily* or *weekly* list, you need to **write down** what you have to do.

- Writing it down makes it concrete – out of your head and onto paper.

- Tick tasks off as you get them done (this feels good!)
- If some tasks haven't been completed then just allocate another time for them. Make sure you write this down too, don't just think about it!
- Keep your lists up-to-date.

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***Time management is Life management***  
***Robin Sharma***

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## **BE WELL PREPARED FOR TESTS AND EXAMS**

During test and exam time, create a study calendar for the month.

- Indicate when your deadlines/tests/exams are.
- Then look at the time in between and plan how you will allocate the studying for your specific subjects.
- Work backwards - from the last day of the month to the beginning. Knowing how much you need to do and how much time you have to do it in can reduce a significant amount of anxiety!

## **HAVE A DEDICATED STUDY SPACE**

This is often overlooked as a contributing factor to poor time management but it is very important. Without a dedicated space that your mind associates with studying then you are more likely to waste time without realising it.

- Determine a place which is free from most distractions (socialising, TV, cell phone, laptop etc.)
- You should be able to maximise concentration in this space.
- Make sure you have all the equipment and material you need for your study session.
- It doesn't always have to be quiet but it needs to be the place where you focus and study best (this differs from person to person).
- Remember your bed will not be one of these spaces! We often associate bed with rest and sleep – not studying.

## REMEMBER

- Be realistic about how much time you have or spend on the different aspects of your life.
- Plan for the next day the night before.
- Writing it down helps take it out of your head!
- Have a dedicated study space with minimal distractions.
- If you get distracted by something else you need to do, make a note of it (unless it's an emergency) and attend to it later.
- Set definite start and finish times – begin and end as you have planned.
- Allocate any unfinished work to another time – do not ignore it!
- Find your own pace and do what works for you.
- Review all of your work – your class notes, your assignments and readings.
- Postpone unnecessary activities until the work is done!
- Identify resources to assist you – study buddies and study groups, your tutors and lecturers, Academic Development and Innovation (ADI), the Writing Centre, the Library and PsyCaD.
- Use your free time wisely!
- Reward yourself with things you enjoy – spending time with friends, social media, fun activities, sport, etc.

➔ **Look out for our other tip sheets on topics such as:**

- Improving concentration, attention and focus
- Limiting academic stress
- Keeping calm during tests and exams
- What's next? After tests and exams
- Motivation
- Stress Relief

Also connect with PsyCaD online for useful information and resources:

- Facebook: PsyCaD@UJ
- Twitter: @PsyCaD
- Website: [www.uj.ac.za/PsyCaD](http://www.uj.ac.za/PsyCaD)
- Mobi Site: [umatter.uj.mobi](http://umatter.uj.mobi)
- uLink and the USay community (Blackboard)