

Creating a Healthy Schedule

Working towards a degree can be challenging, especially when one is trying to balance classes with family life, friends, work, health, and self-care.

It often seems impossible to fit everything into a day or week, but with healthy scheduling, you can accomplish it.

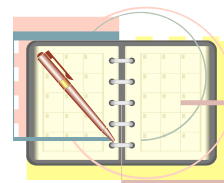
Steps to Creating a Healthy Schedule



1. *List all your regular activities for the semester or term, including the following:*

- Classes
- Study time
- Work schedule
- Family events
- Fraternity, sorority, church, committee, or other meetings
- Exercise
- Eating & meal preparation
- Travel time to and from the home, university, and/or work
- Regular chores

2. *Record them into a master and weekly schedule. Use a format that can be easily changed (like pencil or an Excel spreadsheet). Refer to the schedule before making plans with others.*



3. *When recording study time, take into consideration the following. Then strategically arrange your study times to correspond with those.*



- Your peak and low performance times of the day or night. For example, schedule your study time for your most difficult courses during your peak performance times; and your most interesting course material for your low or poor performance time. **We usually can find energy for what we love to do.**

- Include fun activities, exercise, and healthy eating in your schedule. If you budget these in, you will perform better and be happier.

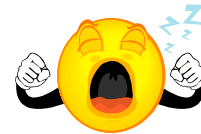


- Be realistic in setting a schedule.
 - If you have been making C's in math and have to take a calculus course, then taking 15 hours and working 20 hours may not leave enough time for the amount of work and concentration needed. You are in control of balancing course load, work hours, graduation date, and amount of relaxation time.

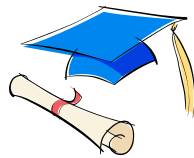
- Plan your study time around necessary family times, i.e., children coming home from school, preparing dinner, helping children with homework.
- Include short breaks after every 90 minutes of intense work and change subjects to provide interest and variety. The length of time you allocate for study depends on your ability to concentrate, the environment in which you will be studying, and the subject matter among other things.

4. *Prioritize your schedule according to your values and beliefs.* When we fulfill our values and beliefs, we are more at peace and can concentrate more.
5. *Allow time for flexibility.* Include blank spaces for study time (even if it is early morning or late evening, just in case something comes up that changes your plans, i.e., illness, doctor's or dentist appointments, family or friends in crisis, etc.).

6. *Pay attention to what your body and psyche need.* If you usually study on Tuesdays from 4-6 p.m. and one Tuesday you feel exhausted, then take a longer break or shift your studying to another day and time. The human body knows what it needs.



7. *Stick to your schedule as much as you possibly can.* If you are unable to, try to figure out the reason. Did something change (a course is more difficult than you anticipated and requires more time; hours at your job changed; the family schedule changed, etc.)? *Rework the schedule as needed.* If you're still having problems, make an appointment with the Counseling Center. It may help to talk about what is interfering.



8. *Keep your goals in your mind.* Post them to the refrigerator, a bulletin board, or your mirror. Be specific in what your goals are so that you are motivated. Instead of "I want to graduate" list what you want to be or do when you graduate: "I'm going to be an Occupational Therapy Assistant and will seek a job in a city near my friends and family." Or, "After I get my history degree, I can go to graduate school at ____." Keeping goals in your mind will help motivate you.



9. *Build in incentives and rewards.* For example, over Spring or Christmas break write on your schedule what you want to do and post it. "Skiing in December in New Mexico as a reward for working so hard!!!"

10. *Establish good boundaries with friends and family* and talk with family members about helping more. Remind them that your academic goals have a time limit. Learn to say no to activities that interfere with your goals.



As you take care of yourself, you will have more energy and greater concentration.

We are here to help. Please call if you are having difficulty creating a healthy schedule.

The ULM Counseling Center
Student Health Center Building
318-342-5220