

Study skills

Organising Your Time

Successful students are effective in their time management, which enables them to lead a balanced life that incorporates study, work, rest, leisure, and exercise. They often achieve their study goals efficiently while meeting deadlines. The following proven strategies will help you to better organise your time.

1. Year Planner

- Use a [Year Planner](#) to note the dates of:
 - o tests
 - o exams
 - o due assignments
 - o social events and family time
 - o paid work commitments
- Display your year planner in your study area. **Update and refer to it regularly** to remind yourself in advance of important matters. Use of the year planner allows you to get organised early, as this contributes to your doing better in assignments, tests and examinations.
 - o In a similar manner, do a **master weekly planner for term breaks**, as they are a valuable opportunity for you to keep up-to-date in your studies, as well as to strengthen your command of your subjects.

2. Master Weekly Planner

- **Create a master weekly planner for term-time**, by filling in the time allocated for class, commuting, meals, paid work and family commitments (negotiate with the people you live with). You can use the Learning Services' [Weekly Planner](#).
- Total up all the remaining time for the week.
- **Allocate enough time (per week) for each subject**, bearing in mind your **ability level** in each subject, and the corresponding **amount of time** needed. Therefore more time needs to be allocated for the more challenging subjects, and vice versa.
- **Schedule the time for each subject carefully**. For example, arrange to preview Chemistry in the evening immediately before the class for Chemistry. Follow up by scheduling the Chemistry review within 24 hours of attending the Chemistry class.
- Consider **how long each study session should be**. Do you work best in half-hour or one-hour study sessions?
- Plan **short regular breaks** of 10 or 15 minutes, which are often enough to refresh you physically and mentally, before the next study task.
- Schedule **regular leisure, recreation and exercise times** to help you maintain good physical and mental health.

- **Plan regular rewards** for consistent performance. Rewards give you something pleasant to look forward to, and so contribute to self-motivation.
- In a similar manner, **do a master weekly planner for term breaks**, as they are a valuable opportunity for you to keep up-to-date in your studies, as well as to strengthen your command of your subjects.

3. Specific Weekly Planner

- Your master weekly planner is a guide to **include specific and realistic goals** in your planner for each specific week. For instance, in the time scheduled for Chemistry preview, state: “preview chapter 6 of the textbook.”
- By doing this for every subject, you **set clear goals** for your studies. You **create a study routine** and gain a sense of purpose. You feel satisfaction in achieving your study goals. You avoid the uncertain situation of wondering what to do whenever you have time for your studies.
- **Break tasks into smaller, more manageable segments**; each assignment should be broken into a series of steps e.g. question and marking guide analysis, and identifying potential sources of information.
- **Prioritise and be flexible**, when necessary, as some things may not turn out as planned. By way of illustration, on occasion some revision time may need to be used for assignment tasks instead, in order that you can meet deadlines.

4. Organise Systems

Examples: **Organise** your study desk and have resources on hand
Create a **filing system** for your lesson notes

5. Minimise Distractions

Examples: Learn in a quiet place e.g. your study room or in a library
Tell **family & friends** not to interrupt or visit between certain times
Take your **phone** off the hook, & switch off your mobile
Remove your mobile & **iPod** from your study area
Close your room door and put up a
DO NOT DISTURB! GENIUS AT WORK sign

To access other useful Learning Services resources and handouts, use the StudySmart tab on the My Ara homepage – <https://myara.ara.ac.nz/pages/academic-support/learning-resources>.

Search for:

- Learning Before, During & After Class
- Assignment Writing Steps
- Tips for Learning through Moodle
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