

## Time Management Matrix

	Urgent	Not urgent
Important	I Looming assignment deadlines Crises Cramming for exams Emergencies Last minute preparations	II Reading lecture notes Personal development Planned study Exercise and health Planning your time/setting goals
Not important	III Some emails and phone calls Many interruptions Some popular activities Some meetings	IV Trivia Some phone calls Excessive TV or surfing the net Time wasters

168...this is the number of hours in a week. If you are student this probably does not feel like it is enough to get all your assignments done, projects to do, or tests to study for.

It is no surprise that many of us want to use our time more wisely. The time management for students matrix gives you a sense of how you are spending time and ways that you can spend your time more productively.

Think of how you currently spend your time on the different activities that you do as a student across an average day, an average week, or an average year.

With these activities in mind consider the matrix below. How much time do you spend in each of these quadrants? You can see that I have filled the quadrants out with activities that I consider sit in each...yours could be different.

### 1. Ask yourself: Is the task important?

**Important tasks** for the student are those that are essential for achieving success in your student life. For many, this may be

- spending time studying and working towards a career,
- maintaining and enhancing your health, or
- sharing time with family and friends.

*Activities that are important are those that contribute to your goals. These exist in Quadrants 1 and 2 of the time management student matrix.*

**Unimportant tasks** are such things as

- surfing the Internet for various cat videos,
- watching TV longer than you really need to, or
- taking unimportant phone calls.

Focusing on these tasks at the expense of more important tasks leads to feelings of lack of purpose as you are not moving towards your goals. These tasks exist in Quadrants 3 and 4.

### 2. Ask yourself: Is the task urgent?

Asking this question is probably a good indicator of the amount of stress that you feel as a student. Urgent tasks are those tasks that are 'tapping you on the shoulder' and asking to be done now. They are Quadrant 1 and Quadrant 3 tasks.

**Quadrant 1 tasks** are the Urgent/Important 'must do' tasks that require immediate attention! They may be a

- crunching assessment deadline or
- the study that you must do for tomorrow's exam.

Quadrant 3 tasks are not important but they are asking for our attention. For example some interruptions, emails, etc.

### 3. Use the matrix to prioritize your time

The symptom of poor time management is spending too much time in Quadrant 1. The cause of the time management problems is spending too much time in quadrant 3 and 4.

The cure for your time management problems is to:

- reduce your time in quadrants 3 and 4 and spend more time on quadrant 2. Use your **academic planner** and your **study schedule** to do this.
- focus your immediate attention in quadrant 1.

By spending your time on Quadrant 2 activities you devote time to important activities before they become urgent.

### 4. Good student time management involves more Q2 time - If Quadrant 2 is so important to good student time management, how can I get more time in this quadrant?

You can spend more time in Quadrant 2 by:

- **Clarify what is important.**
- **Know what your timewasters are.**
- **Use a student planner**
- **Maintain good study techniques.**

Time Management Matrix

**Urgent**

**Not Urgent**

**Important**

**Unimportant**
