



1. Put “first things first” & prioritize

The significance of importance and urgency in choosing our actions is illustrated in the chart below created by Stephen Covey, author of the book The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People.

	Urgent	Not Urgent
Important	<p style="text-align: center;">QUADRANT I</p> <p>Everything in this quadrant is urgent and important. There are your tasks that absolutely have to get done by yesterday.</p> <p>Ex: Staying up all night cramming for an 8:00 a.m. test.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">QUADRANT II</p> <p>This is where you are in planning mode. This is long-term thinking and strategy building done without the pressure of deadlines.</p> <p>Ex: Creating a study group in the first week of the semester.</p>
Not Important	<p style="text-align: center;">QUADRANT III</p> <p>These are unimportant activities done with a sense of urgency. This quadrant often contains stuff that is urgent to someone else, but not important to you.</p> <p>Ex: Attending a hastily called meeting that has nothing to do with your goals.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">QUADRANT IV</p> <p>This is where you waste your time. Become more conscious of your choices and minimize wasting the irreplaceable hours of the day.</p> <p>Ex: Mindlessly watching television until 4:00 a.m.</p>

2. Define your goals.

Goals give us the following:

- a. meaning and direction for our lives
- b. a means in which we can evaluate our progress
- c. a plan to follow

Goals keep us focused so we don't go astray.



3. Create a to-do list.

Organize what you have to do. Split up large projects into small parts. Create a to-do list for each part. Take your goals and break them down into small, measurable steps.



4. Finish what you start

If interrupted, return to finish your task. Set an upper limit for how many tasks you want in progress at any given time.



5. Set aside specific study time.

Complete complex tasks first, or during your best time of day. Set specific times for yourself with dates and times. Don't schedule study marathons. For every hour you are in class per week, plan on two hours of studying outside of class.

6. Identify your time wasters.

Time wasters are not only actions in Quadrant IV, but also can be indecision, lack of planning, jumping from project to project, a disorganized desk, procrastination, insisting on perfection. Finish one project before starting the next. You'll save time not having to reacquaint yourself with each project.

7. Use email filtering software.

Stop wasting time scanning for junk email and deleting them.

**8. Be project specific before you sit down at your PC .**

Have you ever sat down at your PC to do homework, but after a half-hour or an hour passes by, you have accomplished nothing towards your homework? By being project specific at the computer, you can focus on one item and be more efficient. You can also avoid wasting time on Quadrant IV items. Also, use the 20-20-20 rule: Every 20 minutes, look 20 feet away to refocus your eyes, and blink 20 times to moisten your eyes.

9. Set aside specific time when you browse the Internet.

Many people jump online and set out to do one thing, but then get caught up in browsing forums or they look at a new product or get involved in email. Set aside time to check your email, go onto My Space, update your iTunes or PDA outside of time for doing homework. Use a separate file or system for information such as podcasts, rss, or online newsletters. Set aside 20 minutes to catch up on news letters for information.

**10. Two-minute pick-up.**

Practice the "two-minute pick-up" every time you leave a room or your desk. Before you leave a room, turn around and quickly put away everything for two minutes. The more you put away before you leave, the smoother your transition when you return and the less you have to distract you at your desk!

11. Avoid procrastination.

You can do anything for 10 minutes. To get yourself started on something that you have been procrastinating on, grab a timer and set it for 10 minutes. Then do that one thing for 10 minutes. If you continue on after that, great! If not, you at least put 10 minutes into that task.

**12. Delay gratification.**

Give yourself some rewards for completing tasks. Treat yourself to dessert after you have avoided procrastination. Don't go out to eat until you have completed items off your to-do list. At the same time, don't allow yourself to buy that new pair of jeans if you haven't completed your tasks.

