**Construct Your Schedule**

(Adapted MIT & UCSD 6th College Academic Advising)

**PHASE 1: Getting it all on paper**

Even if you're not the type to print each day's to-do list at 6 am, it can be a useful exercise at the beginning of a term to make your plans more concrete by developing a schedule. An easy way to do this is to follow the steps outlined below. Fill in the Weekly Time Tinder by answering the questions below.

**STEP 1: Add All Regularly Scheduled Meetings and Classes**

1. Includes all of your academic, extracurricular, and work commitments that meet regularly throughout the term. As these are inflexible, the rest of your time will have to be arranged around these blocks.
2. Be certain to include fun breaks in your schedule as well, if they meet at a specific time. If your living group has a 10 pm study break that you enjoy, or you have a circle of friends that likes to go out for ice cream together at 7 on Wednesdays, put that on your schedule. These small, brief gatherings will be welcome study breaks for you later on.

**STEP 2: Add Time for Eating, Sleeping, and Personal Essentials**

1. **EATING—**Make your eating times as consistent as possible, and give yourself at least a half-hour for lunch and dinner. You will have earned the break and eating with friends will be something you can look forward to.
2. **SLEEPNG—**Try to go to bed as close to the same time each night as possible. This helps shape a "sleep habit" that prevents insomnia and keeps you on track with your daytime commitments. On days when you need to get up a bit earlier you should plan to go to bed slightly earlier. Does this mean you have to go to bed at 9 every night? Of course not. If the best time for you to concentrate on your work is in the evening, then by all means work in the evening, but do be sure to get your minimum hours of sleep.
3. For your personal essentials, it is not necessary to schedule each item on your list (many only happen occasionally, like doctor's appointments), but remember that getting ready in the morning and traveling do take time. At this stage it might also be wise to add a two-hour block for "errands" on a weekend afternoon, just so you know you always have that time available for laundry, banking, and whatever else might come up.

**STEP 3: Calendar Time for Reading, Studying, and Assignments**

This step takes some thought, because some ways of organizing your study time are more effective than others. The word "study" is too generic. When filling out your schedule, use words like,

**review**

**read**

**work on problem set, etc.**

How many hours do you plan to spend on each subject?

**WHEN: Considering Time**

1. Have you scheduled out study periods in your overall calendar, weekly planner, or daily timeline? See Building a Schedule for points to consider.
2. Are these times reasonable hours of the day during which you are able to devote ample energy and concentration?

**STEP 4: Schedule regular breaks.** When building a schedule for the term, strategically add several regular breaks between classes and in the evenings. **Take 20-30 minutes**; never work through these scheduled breaks. Our minds need an occasional rest in order to stay alert and productive, and you can look forward to a reward as you study. If your living group has a 10 pm study break, or you have a circle of friends that likes to go out for ice cream together at 7 on Wednesdays, put that on your schedule. These small, brief gatherings will become more welcome as the term intensifies.

This will help you consider what you will be doing throughout the week. This will also help you to become more creative and flexible.

**STEP 5: Schedule in times to connect with your faculty members/teachers.**

**STEP 6: NOW,** transfer all the schedule you’ve created from the “Weekly Time Finder” to your weekly planner or agenda.

NICE JOB!

**Phase 2: Adding less frequently, but still important, dates to your agenda**

**Step 1: Add all relevant dates from the academic calendar**. You can download it to your phone or computer, and set alerts for deadlines important to you. At the beginning of each term, be sure that you have [**Add Date**](http://web.mit.edu/registrar/reg/add-drop.html)**,** [**Drop Date**](http://web.mit.edu/registrar/reg/add-drop.html)**s,** [**Midterms**](http://web.mit.edu/registrar/reg/prereg_info.html)**, and the** [**Final Exam week**](http://web.mit.edu/registrar/classrooms/exams/finals/index.html) in your personal calendar, with reminders set ahead of each date.

Step 2: On the first day of each month, September through June, check your grades on Aeries.

Step 3: Pay attention to announcements for club opportunities, visiting speakers, internship and other community opportunities, all of which have dates or deadlines.

**Time Management: Assessing to Balance**

Now that you've built a well-constructed schedule, complete with key dates, you are well-equipped to examine your priorities. To ensure academic excellence, evaluate academic necessities first, then consider extracurricular commitments.

**ACADEMICS**

1. Is the amount of time you've allotted for attending class, lab, and recitations sufficient to ensure you complete all your assignments and tasks without duress?
2. Is the amount of time you've allotted to studying, homework, and other academic preparation sufficient to ensure your personal success?

To ascertain what amount of time is likely necessary to ensure your **individual academic success,** consider the following. Answer the following questions to helps you assess you academic load.

1. What courses are you taking?
2. Of these courses, which do you think will be more or less difficult for you?
3. Particularly for those that are likely to be more difficult, how much time, based on past experience, have you spent devoting to similar courses?
4. Were you satisfied with the outcomes (grades, understanding of concepts) yielded from the previous amount of time you’d invested? If not, adjust accordingly.

Based on your answers, adjust your weekly time finder and weekly planner. Having considered academic necessities, now evaluate your extracurricular commitments.

**EXTRACURRICULARS**

In reviewing your weekly schedule, ask yourself the following questions to determine what and how much your activities matter to you:

1. Aside from going to class and studying, on which activity do you spend the most amount of time and energy?
2. If your commitment of time and energy is substantial, what are you motivations for investing this amount of time and energy to this endeavor?
3. How and why is it of value to you?
4. Does it compromise your ability to commit to schoolwork or other significant endeavors?

Based on your answers to the above questions, how would you revise your initial [time assessment worksheet](http://web.mit.edu/uaap/learning/time/assessment.pdf) and [weekly planner](http://web.mit.edu/uaap/learning/time/weeklyplanner.pdf)?