

Time Management and Organizational Tools



Knowledge

Organization is the ability to arrange your time and the space around you such that you can approach tasks in a functional and orderly manner. Relying on tools to help you stay organized assists with time management.

Below are some suggestions for organizational tools and key **strategies** to improve time management skills:



Strategies

Use a calendar (hard copy or electronic) to establish a “routine”

1. Assign a “physical” space for your calendar; a visible area where you will house the calendar
2. Pick a calendar planner that dedicates at least one page per day
3. Establish boundaries by assigning necessary tasks such as wake/sleep times, rest breaks, meals, etc.
4. Ensure you have time at the end of the day to reflect on success/failure and to adjust your plan for the next day
5. Now use the blank spaces in your day to carefully assign task units in order of priority; starting with the first item that is important and urgent (also see ‘planning and prioritizing for realistic goals’)

Use your cell phone to

- Set audible reminders for tasks that are not routine but important
- Automate routine tasks, e.g., set recurring reminders (every Wednesday, every 2 weeks, etc.)
- Create a master checklist for certain routine tasks, e.g. create a categorized checklist for grocery items instead of trying to recall the list each time; keep adding to the same list over time

Know your prime time – Assign highest priority tasks/units of task at times during the day when you feel most alert and have the most energy

Dedicate realistic times

- Initially, assign one task for each segment of the day; gradually reduce task times to hour/half hour blocks as needed (see resource #1)
- Initially estimate the time it will take you to complete the task; dedicate an additional 50% to perform that task to allow for unforeseeable challenges; reflect on and refine your time estimates over time

Use the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) Cycle to ensure that you are successful in carrying out this new change (see resource #2)



Exercise

- **Plan.** Recognize and develop your goals and create a road map/plan to achieve them
- **Do.** Act your plan; implement it in real life
- **Check.** Review your actions in comparison to your planned activities (see resource # 3); learn from this exercise
- **Act.** Reflect on what happened? Acknowledge success and problem solve around challenges; Begin the cycle again with a new plan

Remember:

Maintain an up-to-date “master” list of things to do
Don’t forget to transfer incomplete tasks to the next day/week



Tip!