

# **NEXT-LEVEL TIME MANAGEMENT FOR SUCCEEDING AT UCT**

By

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**Eukusa akufiki kabini  
ukuzakuvusa umntu.**

**Dawn doesn't come  
twice to wake a person up.**

(You cannot regain lost time, so when  
dawn comes you must wake up and work,  
and not wait another second more.)

(isiXhosa proverb)







# TIME MANAGEMENT IN THE UCT CONTEXT

By now, you know that UCT is a tough environment. Difficult content is delivered at the speed of light. If you blink for a second, you could miss an entire section of work. At school, you might have spent several days or even weeks learning a single concept. This meant you could take time off, skip classes or even study a full term's work in one day. At UCT, it is very difficult to catch up on missed work and impossible to study a term's worth of work in a day. As a result, the time management skills that you developed at school will probably not be sufficient. Don't fall into the trap of thinking that you already have this time management thing down just because it may have worked for you in the past. You need to take your time management skills to the next level if you want to do well at UCT.

*Coming from high school as a smart student, I had good time management and my life was under control. A week in varsity and I had lost it all. I was barely attending classes and I was buried in work I barely understood.*

**Bathabile Ndzendze**  
Second-year computer science student

Why is time management so important at UCT? For starters, UCT has much shorter terms than school: each UCT term is only six weeks long. In this time, you are expected to cover half the course material, complete weekly tutorials/practicals, write at least one class test, and submit additional assignments. You need to do this for each of your four courses!

Why does UCT put this much pressure on its students? UCT used to have longer



terms (like most other universities), but UCT shortened its terms when the South African higher education system was restructured in 2002 and UCT was declared a 'research intensive' university. In addition, UCT's colonial history has shaped UCT's culture with Western ideas about productivity, individualism and competition. It seems UCT believes that students need to be challenged and assessed frequently in order to learn. While we might feel that this is not ideal or aligned with modern educational ideas, it is the current UCT system. It is in your best interests to adapt to this hectic system and develop the necessary skills that will help you succeed at UCT. (For starters, see Emihle's good advice.)



## MY STORY

### ***Yonke into inxesha layo* – Everything has its own time**

Emihle Kwetana *First-year BSc student*



Coming to university was very challenging because it requires good time management, which was not part of my strengths, but part of my weaknesses. A lot of times, I would feel like I do not belong here because of how I managed my time and the results of my bad time management skills. UCT depressed me to a point where I just felt like I don't know, and I don't want to be here. So I started spending more time with friends, watching TikToks and going out every weekend instead of studying. Obviously, my marks dropped. I got more depressed and I started to look for help because it was bad. I got help from Student Wellness Services and the first thing I worked on was time management. I'm not saying everything is okay now, or that I am the best with time management, but I'm trying my best to make enough time for everything I have





going on. *Yonke into inxesha layo* (everything has its own time) – that’s what I needed to understand.

**Advice I’d give to a first-year student is to learn how to manage your time properly. Make a routine and stick to it no matter how hard it is to stick to it. Include everything in it, even the time you spend relaxing and doing nothing. Include the time you’ll spend with your friends, don’t leave anything out. Most of all, reflect on your day (every day)! Tell yourself what you achieved, what you are proud of. It doesn’t have to be big things. You can be proud of how you managed to have breakfast in the morning because you never have time to. Have time for yourself, but most importantly have time for school! Understand that you are here to study and to become a better person, nothing else.**

#### Reading tip

Read this chapter as you would any textbook chapter: scan the whole chapter (read the headings), and then go back to the bits that seem most relevant to you, with pen in hand so you can make notes as you go.

Good time management will make your whole UCT experience more pleasant and manageable. It will reduce your stress and help you to avoid last-minute cramming and deadline anxiety. It will also help you manage any periods of disruption or unforeseen circumstances, such as the COVID shutdowns, protests that disrupt classes and exams, or a health or family crisis that you need to attend to. Good time management will help you through these academic and life challenges if it is part of a realistic, holistic approach in which you pay attention to your physical and mental well-being. We start this chapter with six important principles of time management, and then we help you implement practical strategies that embody these principles. The very last section of the chapter will help you beat procrastination (we hope).



# TIME MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

Pause to  
ponder

What are the *principles* behind your current time management *strategies*?

In order to take your time management to the next level, it helps to understand six principles that are behind all good time management skills. These principles are particularly important in the UCT context, so we explain them in this section.

## **Principle 1: Take responsibility**

You are now an adult! Isn't that cool? For many of you, coming to UCT has brought you more freedom than you ever imagined. You may have moved across the country and no longer have people nagging you to study or telling you it's bedtime. No one at UCT is going to call your family if you don't attend lectures. You have access to free wi-fi, many clubs and societies, liquor stores and parties all around you. You have the power to do whatever you want with your time. However, as the saying goes, "with great power, comes great responsibility". If you are going to stand any chance of succeeding in your academic journey at UCT, you need to take full responsibility for your time. You are the one who will face the consequences of the decisions that you make each day. As a result, it is vital that you take ownership of your life.





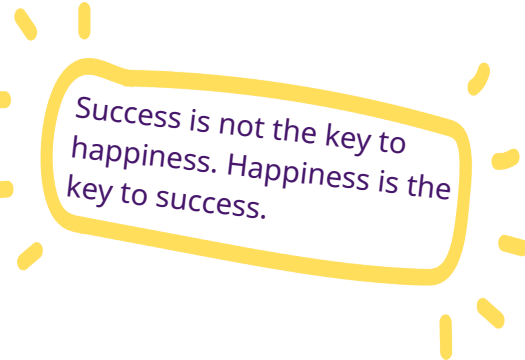
## Principle 2: Practice self-care

Many students make the mistake of sacrificing sleep when they run out of time. This starts a vicious cycle because they are too tired to study effectively and more likely to get sick and depressed, and so fall further behind in their work. Studies show that to cram and 'cross night' or 'pull an all-nighter' is counterproductive, resulting in poor academic performance.

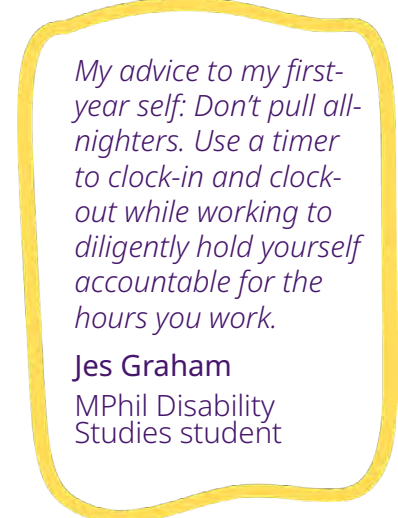

Although it might seem counter-intuitive, the second most important principle for time management is to prioritize self-care. Sufficient sleep improves your cognitive function and ability to concentrate, making it easier to get work done, so you need to set strict rules about when you go to sleep and how long you sleep for. Similarly, a fit and healthy body makes it easier to study. Make healthy eating choices and plan for physical exercise (such as walking to campus instead of catching a shuttle). Your emotional well-being is important, as it's hard to motivate yourself to work when you're feeling down – don't underestimate this! On the flip side, it is important that you hold yourself accountable and dedicate enough time to staying on top of all your work. Self-care is important, but so too are commitment and discipline, which leads us to Principle 3.

## Principle 3: Keep your goals in sight

You've come to UCT so that you can get a degree and achieve your life goals. It's important to keep these goals in mind so that you stay on track, achieve your academic goals and build a successful future. Your life goals can help you stay motivated and focused on your studies. Most importantly, your goals should help you make better decisions about how to spend your time. Mbali has a good motto for this: 'Do your part'.



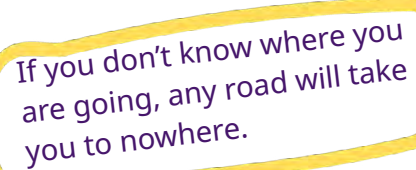
Success is not the key to happiness. Happiness is the key to success.



*My advice to my first-year self: Don't pull all-nighters. Use a timer to clock-in and clock-out while working to diligently hold yourself accountable for the hours you work.*

**Jes Graham**

MPhil Disability Studies student



If you don't know where you are going, any road will take you to nowhere.





# MY STORY

## Do your part

Mbali Myeza

*BSc graduate, computer science*



So, what do I mean by 'do your part'? Maybe you are dealing with family traumas or situations that your peers don't know about. Your part is to be present in lectures and tutorials. Being present is very different from just attending. You can attend a lecture, but your mind may be somewhere else. I can attend my math lecture, but my mind is focusing on my mother who's in hospital that day. I can attend a tutorial, but my mind is focusing on the fact that I haven't made any friends in res and it's bothering me. I will attend my computer science lecture, but I'm focused on the fact that I do not have funding for my studies. When I say, 'be present', I mean take in the knowledge that is being given to you at that time, because the university pace is way too fast for you to say, 'I'll catch up later'. For you to be present, you need to participate in class, revise at the end of the day, get enough sleep and exercise, and do assignments.

Now I could get a call from back home, with my mother telling me her worries. Maybe she doesn't have anyone else to speak to. I'm not saying dissociate from your parents or separate yourselves – you are part of your family and whatever comes with it. Yes, it may be hard to see a family member going through a tough situation. You may want to help, but it's not your part to take it on, especially if they have not asked you to.

I may have a friend who faces a mental health crisis. My part as a friend could be taking them to Student Wellness Services or alerting my res



warden. What is not my part is me trying to be my friend's psychologist, taking on all their problems and making it something that I have to resolve, because then I end up using my mental capacity to heal the world around me. Then I forget or fail that part of me which is the student who has goals in university, and I end up not submitting assignments and failing my goals.

So, my advice is basically, just do your part. Your part is to be the best university student you can be, which means being present in your studies and not taking on things that are not your part. Ask yourself: What do I need to do? What do I expect out of myself throughout the year so that by the end of the year I would have achieved my goals? Maybe jot down a few points of this is who I am, this is what I want to achieve at the end of the year, and this is my part.

#### Principle 4: Prioritize

Time is like money: you only have a limited amount. As a UCT student, you have access to many clubs, societies and social events. You also have a busy academic schedule with deadlines rolling by each week. There often isn't enough time in a day to do all the things that are important or that you are passionate about. You need to decide carefully how to spend your time and budget your time in the same way that you should create a budget for your money. It is impossible to do everything! As the semester gets busier, decide which activities need your attention and learn to say no to other activities. By prioritizing, you will be able to spend enough time and energy on the things that are most important in terms of meeting your goals.

Every **YES** is a **NO** to something else.



**Principle 5: Plan**

Once you've prioritized, you need to plan what to do and by when. Useful planning tools include to-do lists, a weekly schedule, and a year planner. A structured daily routine will help you to stay organized and develop healthy habits. Planning reduces stress, as it provides a way to stay on top of all your tutorials, assignments and tests.

*If you wish to move mountains tomorrow, start by lifting stones today.*

**Principle 6: Work smart**

Both hard work and smart work are important for students who want to be successful at UCT. Hard work means putting in the required time and effort to perform well in your courses. Smart work refers to the use of innovative and effective strategies to achieve your academic goals in the minimum time possible. Smart work takes into account your strengths and weaknesses. A combination of working hard (sheer determination and discipline) and working smart (effective study techniques) will help you to reach your full potential and achieve your academic goals.

**Pause to ponder**

Now that you've read about time management principles, think about what strategies you'd like to integrate in your time-management toolkit.

# TIME MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Now that we've got down the essential principles of time management (taking responsibility for your time and decisions;





self-care; prioritizing by keeping your goals in sight; planning; working smart), let's look at some actual strategies to implement these principles. You are probably using some of these strategies already (at least to some extent) – you should congratulate yourself for that. By combining all these strategies, you can up your time-management game to the next level.

### How to prioritize: The Urgent-Important Matrix

**Pause to ponder**

You developed some prioritization skills in high school (hey, you managed to get into the best university in Africa!). What tricks or techniques do you use to help you prioritize what you need to focus on? Do you prioritize actively or subconsciously? How good are you at realizing when you are spending time and energy on something that is potentially not important?

At UCT, you have to repeatedly assess how you spend your time and decide what is and isn't important. One of the most useful tools to help you with prioritization is the Urgent-Important Matrix [1], which has four quadrants (see Figure 1).





**Figure 1:** Example of the Urgent-Important Matrix, as applied in a BSc first-year context

	URGENT	NOT URGENT
IMPORTANT	<b>A. Urgent and important</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be present in my maths tut</li> <li>• Write my practical report that is due tomorrow</li> </ul>	<b>B. Not urgent but important</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collect medication from Student Wellness Services</li> <li>• Go for a run</li> <li>• Pack a healthy lunch/snack</li> <li>• Start on an assignment that is due in two weeks</li> </ul>
NOT IMPORTANT	<b>C. Urgent but not important</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Laundry</li> <li>• Watch this week's episode of my favourite series</li> <li>• Proofread my friend's essay</li> <li>• Send a birthday wish to my sibling</li> </ul>	<b>D. Not urgent and not important</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upload TikTok for my fans</li> <li>• Download the new Tyla album</li> </ul>

Urgent and important

**Quadrant A** is all the stuff that's urgent and important. These are the things that need to be done now. You don't really have a choice. But be careful, if you spend all your time in Quadrant A you are functioning in crisis mode. This could potentially mean that you are not planning your time properly or that you have spent too much time procrastinating.

Not urgent but important

**Quadrant B** is the stuff that is important, but that we often overlook or postpone, because it is not urgent. However, because these things are important, you need to try to find time for these. If you find time for the stuff in Quadrant B, then you are a time manager, not a crisis manager. You are killing it, well done!





Urgent but not important

**Quadrant C** includes the things that are not super-important, but that have deadlines. This can include certain chores or social activities. Sometimes these are the things that other people want us to do. It's dangerous to spend most of your time here – if you are, it could be a sign that you are living as a 'people-pleaser' or doing too many things that don't align with your academic goals. Learning to say no can help you manage this.

Not urgent and not important

**Quadrant D** is the stuff that we do because it's easy or mindless. It often helps us to avoid doing the hard stuff. These activities can be important for relaxation and de-stressing, but be careful – they can easily become major time thieves.

As a UCT student, you need to focus on the top two quadrants of the Urgent-Important Matrix. If, at certain times of the semester, you feel overwhelmed by everything you must do, try the following approach. First, make a list of everything you need to do. Then categorize your list using the Urgent-Important Matrix and delete things in the bottom quadrants. Next, make a 'to-do' list for today and another list for this week. Finally, pick a task from today's list, take a few deep breaths to focus and start engaging with the task. Give your full attention to this task, leaving the other tasks for later. If you get stuck, move to another task.

## Planning and scheduling tools

Did you know that effective planning takes place at three levels? At the macro (high) level, you need a view of the whole semester which will help you keep track of important deadlines and plan ahead for busy periods. At the meso (mid) level, you need a weekly





schedule that balances your academic workload with self-care activities. At the micro (small) level, you need to plan what you're actually going to do today. These three levels work together to help you stay on track and achieve your goals. It's essential that you plan at all three levels; this section will give you some practical advice on how to do that.

### Semester planner

You need one place where you can see all due dates and deadlines in order to see the big picture and keep track of important things that you need to work on. Stick the year planner that you received in Orientation the wall next to your desk. Alternatively, use the Outlook or Google calendar on your computer, the calendar on your phone or a planning app. Keep your planner up to date – add new assignments and test dates as you find out about them. Also add in the dates that you should start working on assignments.

### Weekly schedule

A weekly schedule helps you to take day-to-day responsibility for your time. Overall, your 168 hours per week should be split into three approximately equal portions of work, sleep and everything else:

1. You should expect to **work** 50–60 hours per week (including lectures, pracs and tuts). That's 8–10 hours each weekday plus a total of 10 hours over the whole weekend.
2. Experts tell us that 18–25-year-olds need 7–9 hours **sleep** per night to function normally, so that's about 56 hours sleep per week. You get most value from your sleep time if it's regular, i.e. approximately the same





time every night.

3. That leaves about 55 hours for the rest: **meals, travel, exercise, play time** (having fun and being spontaneous or creative), **connection time** (with friends and family, which may happen at the same time as meals, exercise or play time), **quiet time** (for praying, meditating, reflecting or just being by yourself) and time for **chores** (like doing your laundry).

Use the weekly schedule that you received in Orientation or create your own in an Excel spreadsheet. Start by putting in all lectures, tutorials, practicals and help sessions. Add in sleep and self-care essentials. Then allocate daily study times where you review your lecture notes for that day (so that you don't forget what you learnt and end up wasting the time you spent in lectures) and work on your assignments.

When building your weekly schedule, you should:

- Be realistic about what you are actually capable of in a day – remember that studying is hard mental work.
- Be consistent. You'll find it easier to work at the same times every day because your body and brain prefer a consistent daily rhythm.
- Write your overall goal for this year on your schedule, so you remember why you should stick to it.
- Display your weekly schedule where you can see it.





- Set alarms on your phone to remind you when it's time to start an activity.
- Be strict with yourself about sticking to your planned bedtime.

### Daily schedule

Once a day, make a list of everything you need/want to do that day. It's often best to do this on a piece of paper or in a notebook so that you can see it as you work. Alternatively, you can use a planning app, which will give you reminders on your phone – see examples at the end of this chapter. Here are some tips for making your to-do lists workable:

- You may find it helpful to start your list with something that puts you in the right frame of mind for studying, such as a breathing exercise, making a gratitude list (everything you're thankful for today) or saying your own study prayer.
- Check your year planner for any deadlines that are coming up and think about what you need to do today towards those deadlines.
- Prioritize your list using the Urgent-Important Matrix: put stars next to urgent-important tasks and brackets around unimportant things.
- If your list is too long, move some things to tomorrow's list.
- Break down big tasks into smaller tasks so that they are more manageable.
- As you get tasks done, cross them off your list. This will give you a sense of satisfaction as you make progress.

### My study prayer

*With gratitude for the gift of today and [other gifts you are grateful for], I ask for the wisdom, discipline and courage to use today well, a good night's sleep and the grace to return to this prayer tomorrow.*

Blessing Gumbu also has some good advice.





# MY STORY

## Five tips that make to-do lists work

Blessing Gumbu *Second-year biochemistry and physiology student*



- **Create a realistic to-do list.** A tip for this: firstly, create a to-do list that underestimates your ability so as to guarantee that you will complete the tasks. Then, as time goes on, create more challenging to-do lists (one step at a time). This is positive for your brain and a way to build discipline.
- **Always make a to-do list with the course and chapter(s)** that you are aiming to study. This is to prepare your brain and body so that you're in a better condition to complete the task.
- **Never make a time-specific to-do list** because this is life, you're a student, things can happen and if you fail to do a certain task at a certain time it will demotivate your studying spirit.
- **Be kind to yourself.** On days when you feel demotivated or you're sick or sad, to avoid regret or guilt, create a minimal to-do list. (It can have two things that you will definitely achieve.) This way you will feel good that you did some work.
- **Remind yourself of the reason why you are studying.** Make sure this a very strong reason, as it forms the core foundation of your self-discipline when studying (e.g. to be successful, to make mum proud, to make myself proud, to get a first, etc.).





### Accountability partners

It's easy to draw up a schedule; it's much harder to stick to it! Here's where other people come in handy. Identify the parts of your schedule that are going to be harder for you to stick to and try to find people who can hold you accountable to those activities. Maybe you're in residence with someone who also wants to make their 8am lecture every day: organize to meet them for breakfast or leave res together every day. If studying on your own is hard, make a regular arrangement to meet others in a communal study space (e.g. the Science Learning Centre in the Chris Hani Building or one of UCT's libraries). Remember, this must be mutually beneficial for everyone in the group. Whatever you do, make it a habit to stick to your schedule. It will make your life simpler and easier.

It is also important that you evaluate how you did and praise yourself for what you did well. Maybe tell a trusted friend or family member, someone who is in your corner, about what you're proud of achieving today. Also recognize that your list may have been unrealistically long – it's normal to over-estimate what is possible in a day. That's okay, there's still tomorrow, where you can and should make a fresh start – as Anelisiwe Marelane recommends. (However, if you find yourself consistently falling behind, despite your best efforts, adjust your curriculum by dropping a course. It's better to pass three courses than to fail four.





## MY STORY

**You must forget about yesterday and do the right thing today**

Anelisiwe Marelane

*First-year computer science student*



*Okuzubalula, ngezinya iimini awuzufuna uvuka uzazi kufuneke u attende o lecture. (It's not going to be easy. Some days you won't feel like getting out of bed knowing very well you have a lecture to attend.) But when the next day comes, you must forget about yesterday and do the right thing today. This advice was the best for me, personally, because I am a perfectionist. Had the Orientation Leader not told me this advice, I wouldn't have made it to the second semester of my first year because *ndandingazokwazi* (I was not going to be able) to forget about yesterday, knowing well I did not do what I was supposed to.*

### Working smart

Working smart means using the time available as effectively as possible. In next week's chapter, we will go in-depth into working smart, but in the meantime, Blessing gives you some practical tips.



## MY STORY

**Smart studying tips**

Blessing Gumbu

*Second-year biochemistry and physiology student*



### Preparing for study

- Firstly, identify what time your brain is most active, so you can do the most difficult tasks during your most active times.
- Study around the same time each day (follow a routine so that your mind and body get used to the idea of studying). Be consistent so that you don't have to drag yourself to study.





- Start small. It can be daunting to study for long hours, especially if you are not used to it.
- Use the Pomodoro technique, using a timer: 25-minute study streak and then a 5-minute break. You can do 2 streaks per course.
- Create a small reward for every study streak that you complete: it can be calling a friend, eating a chocolate, playing a game etc.
- Do you: if you don't like group studies, don't do it, study alone (you'll be more efficient) but keep in touch with a friend so you can ask questions via WhatsApp.
- Remember to rest to allow neuroplasticity to occur. Average hours of sleep: 6.5 – 8 hrs.

#### **While studying**

- Have different phases in your study session: notetaking, reviewing, revision, active recalling, questions or tests. This way you can avoid getting bored or drained during your study session.
- Eat fruits or nuts, as snacks that stimulate brain power.
- Chew gum while studying (it helps with concentration).
- Create questions and write them up on sticky notes (this will help with revision).
- Use the 5-second rule (when a distracting thought comes to mind, decide within 5 seconds to study).
- Colour your notes (or paste pictures) - this will motivate you to actually study/read your notes.
- Teach others what you have learned so that it sticks inside your mind.
- Don't study for long hours (endless) without actually retaining anything.





## Beating procrastination

For as long as universities have existed, procrastination has been the arch nemesis (enemy) of students (and staff!), preventing them from achieving their goals. Research shows that 80–90% of university students procrastinate on a regular basis [2]. Whilst the 'Procrastination Monster' might seem powerful and undefeatable, you should take comfort in the fact that many students have been able to overcome this terrible time thief. Understanding how procrastination works and how it is triggered in your brain can help you to defeat it.

Why do we procrastinate? Procrastination taps into two separate neurological features. The first is that the human brain tends to value immediate rewards over future reward, a phenomenon known as 'time inconsistency'. Our brains are hardwired to want to choose immediate rewards (like watching a movie, going out with friends, or scrolling on TikTok for hours) over future rewards (like graduating from the best university in Africa). The second feature is that our brains are hardwired to avoid pain at all costs. So, when a task makes us feel anxious or nervous, our brains will do just about anything else rather than sit with this painful feeling. As Figure 2 shows, these procrastination activities we engage in at moments such as these are a departure from both what we want and what we should be doing.

Put together, time inconsistency and pain avoidance can make studying for a test or starting an assignment feel like the most difficult thing in the world. This means that procrastination is an emotion regulation problem rather than a time management problem or you just being lazy. Below are some basic tips to help you defeat the Procrastination Monster.

*Time management is the glue that will hold your courses together, but I wish someone had told me that procrastination is a tough soldier to best.*

**Bathabile Ndzendze**

Second-year computer science student

*Why are you procrastinating? Are you afraid of failing? There's nothing wrong with trying and failing – it's failing to try that's the problem.*





**Figure 2:** Visual representation of how things you do when procrastinating relate to your goals and interests



## HOW TO DEAL

### With procrastination

Mohammed Kajee

*Biological sciences PhD student and master procrastinator*



#### Practice metacognition

Your ability to think about your behaviour (called 'metacognition') gives you the power to interrupt your brain's default settings and take action so that you don't fall into the trap of procrastination. Metacognition allows you to stop and identify why you might be procrastinating. For example, you might be avoiding starting your essay assignment because you are anxious about having your English writing ability judged by your lecturer. Once you identify this, you can break the anxiety cycle by reminding yourself how smart and amazing you are and that your self-worth is not linked to your essay-writing ability. In this way, you can attack the Procrastination Monster at its





root, starving it of the food it needs to take over your life.

**Be kind to yourself!**

As you can probably tell from the example given above, self-love plays a key role in helping you to overcome procrastination. This is because procrastination relies so much on the anxiety caused by your insecurities. Positive self-talk and affirmations can go a long way in helping you to overcome procrastination. Constantly reminding yourself that your best is always good enough, how much you have already achieved and what you are capable of can be really helpful.

**Re-wire your reward system**

Another useful way to overcome procrastination is by changing the way your brain's reward system works. Giving yourself small rewards for starting tasks and then regular rewards as you make progress can make a boring assignment feel a bit more fun.

**Be accountable – tell someone**

You can also find useful ways of making the consequences of procrastination more immediate. The easiest way to do this is to get a friend to check in on your progress. In this way, you utilize the benefits of external pressure to help get you started and keep you accountable.

**Make the task more manageable**

One of the major contributors to procrastination is task paralysis caused by the fear/anxiety that is associated with starting a really big task. The easiest way to overcome this is to break the task up into smaller, more manageable chunks. Rather than thinking about needing to write an entire scientific report, commit to writing just the first paragraph of the introduction. In this way,





you slowly get into the task and you will soon realize that this big assignment is actually quite manageable.

**Remind yourself about the negative effects of procrastination**

When you procrastinate, you lose time, damage your self-esteem, add to your stress and don't reach your goals. Also, the imagined task is always far worse than the actual task – so you make yourself unnecessarily miserable with the dread you feel for the imagined task.

**Procrastinate productively**

Instead of giving in to procrastination, tackle another important task on your list. Checking things off, even when it's not your main priority, fuels momentum and boosts your mood. This can make the initial task seem less daunting.



For people who struggle with ADHD and depression, procrastination can function in a very different way. If you suspect that you may be dealing with ADHD or depression, book a consultation with Student Wellness Services.

## CONCLUSION

Good time management is tricky, but key to your success at UCT. You'll get better at it, but only if you take practical steps every day to develop your skills. So, take some time now to start implementing strategies that you haven't implemented before. Remember that for something to become a habit, you need to repeat it daily. How can you help yourself take your time management to the next level?





## READ/WATCH MORE

Here are some more resources to help you manage your time. But don't make the mistake of merely reading/watching/listening more and more – at some point, you have to actually use the strategies. Time management is a practice, not a theory.

### Other guides

This chapter draws on two excellent South African guides for first-year university students: **GRAD: Your Guide to University Success** [3] and **Studying at University: A Guide for First-Year Students** [4]. The Studying at University guide is better suited to Humanities students, but you will find useful tips.

### Time management overviews

This five-minute video from the University of Oxford, '**A Short Guide to Managing Your Time**', provides an overview of key challenges and strategies for managing your time. This 12-minute audio file, '**Managing time**' (30MB) takes you through the GRAD guide material.

### Calendars

You can watch a video tutorial for using your online calendars: Outlook Calendar or **Google Calendar**.

### Planning apps

This **blog** compares seven student planner apps and provides tips for making the most of whichever one you choose. The apps generally allow you to input test/assignment dates and create to-do lists. The apps generally have free versions, and most can





be used on both your computer and phone (you install them on your phone from your phone app store and on your computer from a website). They will take a bit of time to learn to use, so pen and paper together with reminders set on an Outlook or Google calendar may work better for you for now.

### Sleep

If you have difficulty falling or staying asleep, try using sleep meditations on an app such as **Insight Timer**. ('Yoga nidra' meditations work well because they give your mind something to do so it stops thinking about work.)

### Focus meditations

To focus at the start of a study session, you can try a guided meditation using an app such as **Insight Timer**.

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