



Making a study timetable

<http://www.screencast.com/t/sG1bpyQj2XeK>

Transcript

Introduction:

Welcome to this tutorial on making a study timetable from the University of Reading Study Advice team. The tutorial is designed for you to go through at your own pace and you can pause it at any time.

Slide 1. Having a regular routine:

If you don't have a regular routine at university, you may find yourself feeling overwhelmed with your workload, you may find it difficult to achieve an effective work-life balance, or you may feel guilty when you are not studying. If you stick to a weekly study timetable, you will not have to remind yourself to study, and you won't waste large amounts of time and energy trying to avoid studying. Developing a weekly routine will make your time at university less stressful and more enjoyable, because it provides rhythm and stability to your life.

Slide 2. Your study timetable:

To make your weekly study timetable, start by making a chart on your computer or on a piece of paper covering all of your waking hours. Let's enter fixed academic commitments first, such as lectures, seminars, placements and lab work. Next, add regular commitments outside of your studies, like paid work, club meetings, and sports training.

You have little control over when these take place. You do, however, have control over how you plan the remaining time. Before filling in the rest of your schedule, take a moment to think about the times when you are most productive. Most people have a time of day when they are more focused, and a time when they find it harder to concentrate. Trying to process or write a complicated text when your brain isn't working well is a waste of time, and can be demotivating. Work out your best thinking times, and use them for

tasks that need more concentration. For example, if you work best in the mornings and in the late afternoons, that's when you will want to tackle your most difficult modules.

We are now ready to schedule in some study sessions. Let's start by making time for things it would be good to do before or after your lectures and seminars. These include reading and doing exercises before seminars, and writing up your notes after lectures.

Next, mark up times which you are going to commit to as study sessions. These can be used to do coursework, to read and to revise. A good target to aim for is five two-hour sessions a week. Some courses however, particularly in the Humanities, have fewer contact hours and place a greater emphasis on independent study. If that is the case for your course, you may need to add more study sessions to your timetable so that you have enough time for the greater amount of reading and research that is expected of you. Finally, think about where you can add additional sessions as contingency time, which you can use in busy weeks.

Slide 3. Using your study timetable:

At the beginning of each week, decide how you are going to use your study time that week. Use your term plan to see what deadlines are coming up, and what coursework or revision you should be working on that week. If you don't have a term plan, click on the link to watch our video tutorial on how to make one.

It is important to be flexible: if something else comes up, you can trade a study session with a free session. You will probably have busy weeks when you need to use your contingency time and fit in more study sessions, and quiet weeks when you can claim time back.

Don't be discouraged if at first you find it difficult to follow your timetable. Remember that it takes time for something to become a habit, so stick with it. You will almost certainly need to amend your first try as you realise where you have allowed more or less time than you need. After a few revisions, you will have a realistic, practical weekly schedule that you can stick to.

Summary:

So, to summarise, to make an effective study timetable, make a chart covering your waking hours. Add your lectures, lab work, seminars and placements, as well as regular non-academic commitments. Then, add any studying that you need to do before or after your contact hours, and schedule in a number of regular study sessions. Finally, build in some contingency study time that you can use in busy periods. Once you start using your weekly timetable, review it if you need to, until you have a timetable that works for you. Your study timetable will help you get into a regular pattern of work, which will make your time at university less stressful, and more enjoyable.