Making more hours in the day
http://www.screencast.com/t/Hifw0G4N1

Transcript

Introduction: Welcome to this tutorial on making more hours in the day 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. Where does the time go? Do you know where your time goes? If you are aware of how you spend your time, you can manage it more effectively, and squeeze more time out of what may feel like an already packed schedule. To find out how conscious you are of where your time goes, make an estimate of how much time you spend studying and attending lectures and seminars, in a typical term-time week. Also make a note of how much spare time you think you have, what you spend it on, and how much time you spend on chores and paid work.

Slides 2. How do you use your time? The next step is for you to start logging your time to see how you are actually spending it. A good way of doing this is by keeping a time-use diary. Draw up a grid with 24 squares. Over the course of a day, list the things you do each hour in a square. Keep it up for 24 hours to find out how you're actually spending your time. You'll get an even better picture if you do it for a few days.

Afterwards, check how much time a day you spent on academic work, on keeping fit, on socialising, et cetera. How does this compare to your initial estimate?

See if you can identify what your time wasters are. For example, you may be spending a disproportionate amount of time reading, or re-writing notes. Perhaps you are wasting too much time on social media, or maybe you often take long coffee breaks with friends.

Ask yourself what you need to prioritise, what you can cut out, and where you can make more time.

Slide 3. Finding more time: Let's look at a few common timewasters, and how you can deal with them.

If paid work often gets in the way of studying, work out if it is possible to earn the amount you need in the summer holidays or in the first few months of the academic year, so that you have more time in the busy exam period.

If friends and family make too many demands on your time, make it clear that you need study time, and ask to be left undisturbed for certain times in the day or week. Tell them when you are available, and when you are not. A real friend won't mind waiting a bit longer to chat.

If your leisure activities are taking up too much time, think about which ones you find most rewarding and which least. Can you drop the least rewarding activity, or reduce your involvement in it?

Another common time waster is procrastinating when you are working on an assignment because you can't get started. If procrastination is something you struggle with, click on the link to watch our video tutorial on how to overcome it.

You can also make more time by using dead time, for instance time spent waiting on a bus or sitting on a train, or the time in between lectures. Use these fragments for less intense tasks, such as testing yourself with cue cards or going over your notes.

Finally, don't forget that thinking time counts as study time! Your brain needs some time to process information. And you can do thinking anywhere – when you are walking to campus, in the gym, or when you're cooking, for example.

Slide 4. Making your time work harder for you: A final way to make more time is by studying as effectively as possible. This can help you save lots of time, and improve your marks. Try some of the following suggestions:

Work out at what time of the day you are most focused and productive. Keep complex tasks, such as writing an essay or reading a complicated article, for your best thinking time. Keep more routine tasks for other times.

Think about what you want from your reading before you start. Make a list of questions and look for the answers. Having targets will help you focus and avoid those moments when you feel like you can't remember a thing you've just read.

Stop reading earlier. You don't have time to read everything on the reading list, and you're not expected to. Read enough to give you a clear understanding. If necessary, you can do more reading once you've written your first draft and you know what you need to add.

Reading for a lecture may be more useful after the lecture than before. Unless the lecture is all about a specific text, you are likely to understand reading better afterwards, which means it will take less time. On the other hand, reading for a seminar is always more useful beforehand! Seminars are where you have a chance to ask questions and develop your understanding of a subject, so to get the most out of them, you have to feel able to take part.

Don't re-write your notes – do them right the first time! Think about what you want to find out before you start reading, leave the pen on the table and only pick it up when something's worth noting.

Always plan before you write. This always saves time. You may think that you are saving some time by writing without a plan, but you will spend far more time wondering what to write next, and your writing will be muddled and unclear.

Slide 5. Summary: To recap, the steps to making more hours in your day are:

- Become aware of how you are currently spending your time

- Identify any time-wasters

- Tackle those time-wasters and make use of dead time

- Make your time work harder for you by studying more effectively

Do these things, and you will magic more time into your life at university.