

LEARNING RESOURCES: LEARNING ONLINE IN UNIVERSITY

PRIORITIZATION STRATEGIES

PRIORITIZING YOUR TIME USING A PRIORITY MATRIX

Despite your best efforts to manage your time effectively, you may find yourself facing periods where you feel overwhelmed by everything you need to do and unsure where to start. Knowing how to use prioritization strategies sets you up to make the most of your time and get the important things done.

Step 1

Start by writing out a master list of all your “To Dos” (ie. a “brain dump” of everything you need to do for your classes and your life)

Step 2

Review the four categories below:

	IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT
URGENT	Do immediately!	Reschedule or delegate
NOT URGENT	Schedule it	Do it later (when you have free time)

Urgent tasks are those that require your attention immediately and will have consequences if not dealt with.

Important things are those tasks that get you closer to your overall goals. They are meaningful to your long term goals and values.

Step 3

Think about each item on your to-do list and place each of your to-dos in the appropriate box. Be careful about what you put in the important and urgent box, as spending too much time in this box can cause burnout. Some examples may include:

	IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT
URGENT	Do immediately (Start with these to-dos first!) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Test tomorrow• Assignment due tomorrow• (Deadline-driven projects with immediate timelines)	Reschedule or delegate (These to dos can usually wait to be completed until third!) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Phone calls• Laundry
NOT URGENT	Schedule it (Set a time to complete these to-dos second!) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Study and review time• Deadline-driven projects with time to spare• Socializing/hobbies• Physical activity	Do it later (These to dos can be completed when you have free time and can be done last) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Social media• Video games• Television

Step 4

Make a plan for the to-dos that you are going to get done right away as well as a plan for those to-dos aren't going to tackle right away. You can choose a time management tool to make a plan that works for you. Be sure to include in your schedule time to study and review your course materials, give yourself adequate time to get your assignments done, seek help from your TA or instructor and/or visit the library and writing centre.

Try it yourself below!

My to-do list

	IMPORTANT	NOT IMPORTANT
URGENT	Do immediately	Reschedule or delegate
NOT URGENT	Schedule it	Do it later

Remember to be realistic about how much work you can do each day! When you are creating any sort of future plan, create a reasonable amount of work to ensure that you can stay on track (link to stay on track worksheet).