

HOW TO MAKE TIME YOUR FRIEND



***Your Key to Taking the
Stress out of Study***

Version 1.2

By Chris Lang

This free eBook is published by Chris Lang as a service to the student community and as an extension to the acclaimed Study Guide by Binny & Chris Lang - "**Your Future Success**" available exclusively from the book's website at: <http://www.study4results.com/time>.

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HINTS

Here are a few quick hints on using this eBook in your Acrobat Reader.

LINKS

There are links to other pages in the eBook, and to relevant places on the internet. They appear like [this](#) in the text. Just click on the link to move to the linked location.

BOOKMARKS

To make it easy to find your way around the eBook we have included **Bookmarks**. These are particularly useful if you have a larger monitor.

Under Acrobat's **Window** menu, select **Bookmarks** or just press **F5**. A set of bookmarks will appear in the left margin. These bookmarks allow you to move directly to different parts of the book. There are also links to places outside of the book.



PAGE VIEW

You can also adjust the way that Acrobat displays pages and sizes the text of the document using the **View** menu.

The settings which seem to work for most screens are shown on the right.

If you have a larger, or high resolution, screen you will probably find that selecting **Fit in Window** will make the eBook easier to read.



PRINTING

You can also print this eBook in the usual fashion. It is formatted for printing on A4 paper.

Identify Your "Big Rock" Issues

A philosophy professor stood before his class and had various items in front of him. When class began, he picked up a large, empty jar without saying a word. He then proceeded to fill it with rocks, right to the top – rocks about 5mm (2") in diameter.

He then asked the students if the jar was full. And they agreed that it was.

So the professor then picked up a box of pebbles and poured them into the jar. He shook the jar lightly. The pebbles, of course, rolled into the open areas between the rocks. The students laughed.

He asked his students again if the jar was full. They agreed that yes, it was.

The professor then picked up a box of sand and poured it into the jar. And, of course, the sand filled up everything else.

"Now," said the professor, "I want you to recognise that this is your life."

"The rocks are the important things – your family, your ongoing education, your health, your spiritual wellbeing – anything that is so important to you that if it were taken from you, then you would be devastated.

"The pebbles are the other things in life that matter, but on a smaller scale. The pebbles represent things like your job, your apartment, your car.

"The sand is everything else. The small stuff. But you need to understand ... if you put the sand or the pebbles into the jar first, there is no room for the rocks.

"The same goes for your life. If you spend all your time and energy on the small stuff, the material things ... you'll never have room for the things that are truly most important to you.

"Pay attention to the things that are crucial in your life.

“Spend time with your family. Attend to your ongoing learning. Go dancing with your partner. There will always be time to go to work, clean the apartment, throw a party and fix the car.

“Take care of the **Big Rock** issues first – the things that really matter.”

Make sure you set your priorities, your key goals and objectives:
The rest is simply just pebbles and sand.

The A To Z Of Managing Your Study Time Well

ACTIVITY Vs RESULTS

Sometimes you can lose sight of your objectives and intended results for the week, and start focusing your attention simply on activities. In other words: keeping busy gradually becomes your objective. And you find yourself confusing movement with achievement.

Most of us are action-oriented. You probably prefer to be in the thick of things – doing, instead of thinking or planning ahead. You tend to react to what happens around you ... because reacting takes very little pre-planning.

What you need to do is re-focus on your priorities. Zero-in on the appropriate task, and see it through to completion. And do it with [Zest](#).

You see, successful students have a strong purpose that helps them form the habit of doing the things they don't like doing ... in order to reach the end result they want.

BREVITY

Economy with your words and actions will help you make best use of your time; plus you'll achieve better clarity and understanding.

When it comes to writing ...

1. Learn to write with fewer, shorter words and sentences. You're probably writing too much already, without actually saying enough.
2. Always plan before you write. A brief, well-constructed outline may well account for half the work involved.
3. Write for your reader, not for yourself. And make what you say easy to read and understand.
4. Use simple, expressive words; strong verbs, rather than adjectives; and the active (rather than passive) voice, in constructing your sentences.
5. State your main point or conclusion in the very first sentence (or paragraph) of whatever you write. Then, what follows simply supports or validates that statement.

CONTINGENCY PLANS

Anticipation is generally far more effective than having to find a remedy. You can avoid surprises by expecting the unexpected, and allowing for it somewhere in your daily and weekly plans.

As you'll appreciate: your computer crashing two days out from your deadline is not nearly as devastating as it crashing the night before – when you've left things to the last minute. With a little foresight, and a contingency plan, you can easily cope with most crises.

DEADLINES

Whenever you impose deadlines on tasks or projects *and* stick to them, it helps you overcome any indecision and procrastination.

You'll find beating a deadline makes you feel good, because you're "in control". So, whenever you have a win, give yourself a reward –

however small. That way, you'll be eager to make the next deadline ... and the next!

EFFECTIVE VS EFFICIENT

Becoming confused by these two concepts can happen to the best of us. You see, if you're *Efficient* ... you're doing the task right!

But when you're *Effective* ... you are doing the *right* task, right. Can you appreciate the difference?

For example: you may have just finished a perfect English essay – well argued, the spelling is all correct and it looks really great. But it's not due in for two weeks. Whereas, your yet-to-be-started Maths assignment is due in tomorrow morning.

You see, you've been working efficiently, but on the wrong task. So, you've been ineffective in achieving your overall objectives for that week.

All you need to do is think ahead, and envision the organised person you want to be.

Focus

You'll find that successful students concentrate their efforts on the critical few tasks, books, topics and events (around 20%) which will produce (for them) their major results (around 80%). And that holds true whether you're taking notes, preparing essays, revising, or writing answers in exams.

When you stop to think about it ... you're not talking rocket science here, just common sense.

Another trick is to keep a list of things which can be done in 15 minutes or less. So, whenever you finish something early (or have 20 minutes that would otherwise be wasted) just go to your short-task list and pick one.

Here's an example of what I mean: Do you realise that if you wrote for only 15 minutes a day ... at the end of twelve months, you'd have enough material to publish a book.

No stress. Just a plan, and Focus!

By learning to focus on your longer-term goals and short-term objectives, imagine how much more you can accomplish over a week, or a month, or a whole year.

GROUPING

Whenever you have related tasks, it's best if you can group them together.

Let's take reading for instance – seeing as how it takes up a major part of your study time.

1. You don't necessarily have to read everything on the specific topic – certainly not at the time you come across it.
2. Scan the table of contents of books and magazines, instead of reading the entire chapters or articles.
3. Schedule regular reading sessions – which doesn't have to be daily.
4. Consider sharing the reading with others, and then swapping your notes afterwards.

Here's a reading technique I've been using for over 30 years now. It's very simple: Scan ... Tear (or photocopy) ... File, and ... Read when you need!

Set up a series of folders listing your key topics of interest (both for study, and for you personally), and simply file the "article" away until you are ready (and able) to take action on it. Why waste your time reading it the first time you come across it, when you'll have to completely re-read it later as you act on it.

All you need to know upfront is that the article somehow contributes to your key items of need, or interest. Only when you act on it, do you need to read it in full.

HABITS

The habits you form over time can be both good and bad. It's the good habits you want to cultivate – and hopefully, this "A-Z" will give you quite a few of those to work on.

But your bad habits are the ones you'll need to change – and that will take some vigilance on your part. However, the good news is ... you can replace an old bad habit with a good one, in only 21 days.

For example: "Call me anytime" sounds fine for your friends. But, when you're trying to concentrate on an assignment, it will drive you crazy.

So, during the study term (and particularly during revision time) try arranging 3 or 4 "fixed" times during the week, when you all plan to relax and talk to one another on the phone. Simply get out of the habit of always being available.

This simple change is something your friends will actually thank you for, when they see how much more study output they're able to achieve – for no more effort.

INDECISION

Indecision should be viewed as a decision NOT to decide.

Deferring, or putting off your decisions or actions, soon develops into a bad habit which can:

1. cost you time;
2. lose you opportunities;
3. increase pressure on your deadlines; and
4. become the main reason for the crises you find yourself in.

Basically, you're procrastinating! You're simply putting off doing something – which generally happens whenever you are faced with a tough decision, or some unpleasant task you have to do.

So what steps can you take to overcome the problem? If it's something you don't like doing, make sure you tackle it when you're fresh and in a good frame of mind. And, once you start, keep at it

until you finish – this saves you having to face the unpleasant task a second time.

Here's something that works well for me. And you can make it your "secret weapon", for when there's a major project you're finding it hard to make a start on.

Before going out somewhere, or just before going to bed, spend about 10 minutes to write down a simple overview of all the steps you have to take (in point form) to complete this project, task or assignment. It may only amount to half an A4 page of bullet points, but you now have your plan of attack! And your battle is now half won – certainly, psychologically.

You see, when you go to bed that night with your key points now on paper ... your brain will now go to work (while you're asleep) and come up with ideas that will amaze you – ready for you to tackle the assignment in earnest the next day.

If you don't believe me, just try it for yourself – and you'll find it works every time. It will remove those past blockages you've been having.

JUDGEMENT

You need to become flexible in scheduling your time to accommodate things beyond your control.

When you are confronted with an overwhelming task or project ... start with the most critical portion. By making a start, the battle is half over; and the rest of the project will fall easily in line.

Often you'll plan activities, and yet fail to plan your time. It's important for you to assign specific timeframes to your tasks. You see, tasks and activities are never ending – there's always something else that can be done. So your plan needs to be built around your most vital element – time!

Time planning involves you answering four simple questions:

1. What do I want to accomplish?
2. What tasks or activities must I perform to accomplish it?
3. What are the priorities involved?
4. How much time will each task require?

When scheduling your time, make sure your time estimates are realistic. And kick start your day by doing your #1 priority task first!

KEEPING ON

When you maintain your momentum until tasks are completed ... when you carry things to a conclusion ... you will always obtain better results than those who don't.

Persistence, when linked with Focus, is a powerful (and winning) combination of attributes – because, together they help you to block out any distraction and discouragement.

Over the years, there would have been countless opportunities lost had I given up too early; instead of persisting, even in the face of ridicule. You see, if you really believe in something (and want it badly enough), persistence will become the key to your ultimate success.

LISTENING ... AND PAYING ATTENTION

The art of listening holds a vital place in the function of communication. And the effectiveness of communication increases with the degree to which you pay attention – be it your lecturers, in conversation or while reading.

In other words ... wherever you are – be there! If you're in a lecture, or gathering information for an assignment ... don't be daydreaming about how much fun your weekend away will be. Because, I will guarantee you'll have an "attack of the guilts" over the weekend – about all the work you (should have but) didn't get done during the week.

Therefore ... your study time, AND your weekend away, will have both been a waste of time, and nervous energy.

MOTIVATION

If you're motivated, you'll tend to use your time more effectively – because, you won't be “looking for” distractions to avoid having to complete the task at hand.

That's why we get you setting goals from the outset, in **Your Future Success**. You see, Goals are simply Results in Advance. And it's the anticipation of the pleasure those Results will bring, which will keep you motivated.

So, here's the simple formula for success:

1. Clearly define your Goals.
2. Accept that you can achieve them.
3. Act on them! (After all is said and done ... there's a lot more said, than done).
4. Get excitedly expectant – get ready to receive them.

NIGHT-TIME

Most people think when you turn in at night, all that's left to do is sleep. But you'll find you can actually get a lot of productive work done while you're sleeping.

You see, if you pose a question to your subconscious before you fall asleep ... you'll have 6 to 8 hours for it to work on the answer. And when you awake, you'll have a clear head full of fresh ideas on how to proceed forward.

We discussed earlier, how briefly scoping a major project at the end of the day can help you get over your tendency to procrastinate – which is true. But the other half of the solution is the rush of great ideas you'll have the next morning.

Just imagine being able to put your sleep-time to productive use. Perhaps that's a habit worth developing.

OBJECTIVES

You'll find more effective results are generally achieved through pursuing planned objectives, than by chance.

If you think of your goal as the end of your journey ... then your objectives are the signposts along the way. They tell you whether or not you're still "on track".

So you need to ask: "What Objective do I plan to achieve next week?" Instead of: "Let's see what I have to DO next week."

If you're able to focus on your Objectives, then you simply plan which activities will lead to you achieving those Objectives.

PARADOX OF TIME

No one ever has enough time, yet everyone has all there is.

You see, time is the one resource we all have an equal amount of. It's what you do with it that counts.

By having clear Goals, and Objectives, with fixed end-dates ... you're well on the way to mastering this paradox. Because your focus is then on the "Big Rock" issues of your life.

(See also: [Identify Your "Big Rock" Issues](#))

QUIET TIME

If you're able to plan for periods of uninterrupted concentration, you'll find you achieve far better results.

Setting aside a regular "Quiet Time", and putting a hold on your phone calls, is probably the most effective way to accomplish this.

REALITY

Quickly learn to distinguish between which of the decisions you're called upon to make are revocable ... and which are irrevocable.

A decision you are able to change, can be made faster and with fewer available facts. If you're right, you've gained a time advantage. But, if you're wrong, there's more time to correct things.

Obviously, when changing your decision is hard (or impossible) ... the stakes are higher. But, fortunately, the revocable decisions far outweigh those that aren't. So get real, make your decision and move on.

SEQUENCE

You need to allocate your available time to the various tasks in an ordered sequence of their priority. Sounds quite logical, doesn't it? However, by always doing that, it will make sure you don't "major in minors".

The most frequent mistakes you can make are:

1. putting tasks onto your list in a random order – usually the order they occur to you.
2. not having some priority code to distinguish between the various tasks on your list.
3. not scheduling how best to use your day.

Most people tend to use their time working on tasks they *like* doing. Therefore, important assignments tend to be given a lower priority. However, make sure you save the best part of your day for your most demanding tasks – for some that's early in the day, others are night owls.

So, try to see your friends during the hours in which you're not operating at your peak performance.

TYRANNY OF THE URGENT

Human nature being what it is, you tend to respond to the urgent items and pressures of the moment. And neglect the more important tasks, which are left undone.

Your "Time Test" Matrix

One simple way to check if you fall into the Tyranny Trap, is to divide a blank page into four sections, as shown opposite.

Place each task you did over the past few days, into one of the four squares.

	Important	Not Important
Urgent	1	3
Not Urgent	2	4

For example: an urgent task, that's not important, goes into square "3". Your most significant tasks go into square "2" (ie: important, but not urgent). If you don't complete enough square "2" tasks, they soon become square "1" tasks. And that's bad.

You see, square "1" tasks tend to be done in a hurry (and often without enough time or thought).

Next, compare your tasks in squares "2" and "3". Were your tasks in square "3" (the urgent, but not important ones) actually given a higher priority? Well that's a real worry – because they're actually Trivia! And yet, you've given them a higher priority than square "2".

You see, ignoring tasks in that square will generally cause you about 5 times as many headaches than ignoring tasks in other squares:

- If you ignore tasks in squares "3" & "4", it won't cause you any real drama; and
- If you ignore tasks in square "1", things can't get much worse than they already are; but

By ignoring tasks in square "2", it means something that's not yet a problem, could turn into a serious problem.

Here's how you should classify the tasks you place within each square.

And, as you've probably gathered, square "2" ought be your principal Focus; and where you should spend most of your time.

	Important	Not Important
Urgent	Crisis 1	Trivia 4
Not Urgent	Key Tasks 2	Waste Of Time 3

UNREALISTIC TIME ESTIMATES

It's all too easy to form an optimistic view of just how long a task (or assignment) will take you to complete.

So, for you to be realistic in deciding how much you can fit into your day ... you need to accurately assess how much time you need to allocate to each task.

VISIBILITY

Whatever you can see, becomes the focus of your attention; and it has a far greater chance of being achieved.

And that goes for key Objectives, as well as useless trivia. Therefore, avoid cluttering your desk with unrelated (and probably unproductive) material. You see, as soon as something else catches your eye ... your attention drifts from what you originally set out to do.

That's why you write your goals and objectives down, and review them regularly – because it helps to keep them “top of mind”. And that improves your probability of achieving them.

WORKLOAD

Work tends to expand to fill the time available (Parkinson's Law).

So, while you certainly shouldn't over-allocate your day with major things to be done ... you do need to stretch yourself. Otherwise, you'll quickly find other people's priorities will start to fill up any gaps you've left.

It's your life and your future. Therefore, you should be working on your own priorities. Just make sure you've identified exactly what they are.

Your goals and objectives are your “Big Rock” items. And it's things related to them, which should form the majority of your workload.

X-ING-OUT

X-ing-out time for yourself in all of this, is vitally important.

You see, YOU are one of your “Big Rock” items. Because, if you don't survive, grow and flourish ... then, your whole life has really been a total waste of time, hasn't it?

So, you need to look out for (and look after) yourself. That certainly doesn't imply being self-centred. It simply means setting aside time for your own enjoyment – time to pamper and reward

yourself – for all the hard work you’ve put in, your constant focus and the effective results you’re achieving along the way.

Simply, stop to “smell the roses”, reflect on what you’ve done so far and just treat yourself every now and then – before returning to the fray.

Otherwise, you’ll end up burning yourself out!

YOUR DAILY PLAN

A daily plan, prepared the night before, does wonders for your productivity the next day.

We’ve already talked about sleeping on a problem in [Night-time](#). Well, the same principle applies to the various tasks in store for you tomorrow – you bring your creativity into play, by consigning your plan to your subconscious.

Ironically, many of us simply don’t think we have enough time to plan. Besides, in the past you’ve probably done reasonably well without a plan – so, why the need for one now?

However, in your heart you know: Life as a student is different today – there’s so much more competition to succeed. Therefore, to help reduce your stress, just consider this:

If you’ve prepared a simple plan for tomorrow, with appropriate priorities on your various tasks ... you don’t need to waste time feeling guilty about what you haven’t done! Because, you couldn’t have achieved any more than you did.

So, straight away, you feel good – as you set about your plan for tomorrow.

Five ways to get more energy for Study -

If you feel bright and alert, you'll clearly achieve more. So, here are five things that can increase your available energy.

1. Plan your day

You've now got that one fully covered, haven't you?

2. Reduce your sleep

The average person sleeps 7 hours 57 minutes. But sleep researchers regularly confirm most people only need 6.5 to 7 hours of sleep. You see, too much sleep actually reduces your vitality when you're awake.

3. Trim your midday meal

Your afternoon drowsiness is usually due to having too large a lunch – particularly, if you have too much refined carbohydrates (like bread, sugar, potato chips, and so on).

At first, these things will pick you up. Then drowsiness quickly starts to set in after about 90 minutes. So try a salad-and-fruit lunch when you're studying. And certainly don't skip breakfast, because that's your most important meal of the day.

4. Increase your exercise

Exercising enough (particularly in the morning) to make your head feel clearer, will oxygenate your body – especially your brain. When your body is full of fresh air, you feel much more alert.

5. Develop positive attitudes

The same thing can happen to you on two different days. One day it doesn't worry you, but the next day you can become annoyed.

The difference is a positive mental attitude – which some specialists feel is the biggest single factor in deciding your success or failure.

Here's a simple way to develop a positive mental attitude – change the way you get out of bed. Don't take 30 minutes to drag yourself out; jump out and straight away!

Then, talk to the mirror and tell yourself why today is a great day. And keep repeating your reason(s) aloud until you're convinced, and ready to face the day with a positive attitude.

If you feel your spirits sagging during the day, just give yourself another pep-talk.

Follow these five simple steps, and you will ... feel far more bright and alert; achieve considerably more each day; and probably enjoy your life a whole lot more.

One Final Thought ...

When you are organised, you have a special power.

You walk with a sense of purpose. Your priorities are clear in your mind.

You orchestrate complex events with a masterful touch. Things seem to fall into place when you reveal your plans.

You move smoothly from one project to the next with no wasted energy.

Throughout the day you gain stamina and momentum as your successes build.

People believe your promises because you follow through.

And, when it comes to the finish line, you're a winner.

If you can learn it early ... managing your time effectively will become a life-long skill.

If you found the ideas in this book helpful in improving your study results and you have not already have a copy of the excellent study guide "**Your Future Success**" by Binny & Chris Lang, check it out at

<http://www.study4results.com/time>