

**NELSON MANDELA**  
UNIVERSITY

**TIME MANAGEMENT**



## OUTCOMES

After learning time management, students should be able to:

- identify distractions and solutions.
- get organized with their work.
- to work with 5-step plan.
- create a time schedule.
- apply the promodoro technique to their studies.

### 1. IDENTIFY DISTRACTIONS AND SOLUTIONS

It is quite difficult to avoid distractions in the fourth industrial revolution that is characterized and surrounded by connectivity in the digital age. A big distraction for students nowadays is a cellphone with internet that allows students to be more active on things such as social media, video games, movies, music, and other related issues.

The best way to avoid distractions is to write down everything that you think is a distraction in your life and personal development. Once you are done, write down a possible solution for each distraction. Examples:

- Random web surfing. Unplug your internet cable or disable your wi-fi. If you must do research, write down everything you need to search for beforehand and stick to it.
- Playing video games. Study at the public library or at your university, removing temptation. If it is a phone game, uninstall it.
- You get distracted by your phone. An easy solution might be to keep yourself logged out of social media while studying or switch to airplane mode.

As guided by the above-mentioned examples, please grab a piece of paper, or use your laptop or smartphone and do an exercise on distractions and solutions. Be as honest as you can with your distractions.

**Click on the links below that will take you through different videos to further see how you can manage your distractions.**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=64HmAcPXR70>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CQIZ1ypYiS0>



## 2. GETTING ORGANISED

Most students do not really think about how their workspace impacts productivity. Optimising your dedicated workspace can boost your study time while keeping you informed about tasks and deadlines. The following exercises might be useful to you.

- As a student, you are more likely to move regularly from your place of residence to the university and back, therefore, it is necessary to have a

simple system that allows you to pack within seconds while it is easy to maintain.

- It is advisable to keep a shelf in your room with study materials, where you put files, books, pens, notebooks, etc. Use a box for each course, where you put notes, photocopies, handouts, journal articles, etc.
- Pin up a weekly timetable where you see it every day, such as the door. In this timetable, mark your exams, lecture projects deadlines and other social events.
- You might need to have everything else you need on your computer or phone. Remember: you need to optimise for being mobile and having many papers and other items may restrict your mobility.

### 3. THE 5-STEP PLAN

Students need to juggle many different commitments, such as deadlines and social life. So, it makes sense that one of the time management exercises is to assist you to plan quickly in order to get back on top of things. Below is a step-by-step guide to enable you to deal with different commitments:

**Step 1:**

**List Everything**

Write down all your commitments and deadlines.

**Step 2:**

**Break it Down**

Take on big tasks and turn them into smaller steps.  
For example, a 2 000 word essay can sound intimidating,  
but writing 500 words per day would make it more manageable.

**Step 3:**

**Prioritise your Tasks**

This refers to organising all the tasks under 3 headings, namely, now, soon, and later.  
For instance, an assignment that has a deadline within five days time needs to be allocated  
under the category of now, since you have to start working on it immediately.

**Step 4:**

**Do Immediately**

Start with something on your "now" list and get it done.  
That sense of achievement will help you build momentum.

**Step 5:**

**Prioritise the Rest**

Now go back to all the other tasks and put them in order.

#### 4. CREATING TIME SCHEDULE

Use the 5-step plan above to begin scheduling your own time. Below is an example of what a university work schedule could look like when you plan for all of your modules and calculate sufficient time for all your academic activities.

# Weekly Time Schedule

DATE:     /     /     /							
TIME	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
6:00						<b>FREE DAY that can be used if there is a need. Extra time to study for a test / exam / working on an assignment.</b>	
7:00	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast		
7:45	Pre-reading for Psych101	Sos101 on Moodle	Pre-reading for Psych101	Sos101 on Moodle	Pre-reading for Psych101		
9:05	Psych101 on Moodle	Sos101 Notes & 30 min Exercise	Psych101 on Moodle	Sos101 Notes & 30 min Exercise	Psych101 on Moodle		
10:25	Study - review Psych101 Notes	Study	Study - review Psych101 Notes	Study - review Sos101 Notes	Study - review Psych101		
11:45	Study	Study	Study	Study	Pre-reading for EngL101		
13:05	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch		Study - Review this week's Sos101 notes
14:25	EngL101 on Moodle	Pre-reading for Phil101	EngL101 on Moodle	Pre-reading for Phil101	EngL101 on Moodle		Study - Review this week's Phil101 notes
15:45	Study - review notes for EngL101	Phil101 on Moodle	Study - work on EngL101 Assignment	Phil101 on Moodle	Study - review EngL101 notes		
17:05	30 min Exercise & time to relax	Study - review Phil101 Notes	30 min Exercise & time to relax	Study - review Phil101 Notes	Study		
18:30	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner		Study - Review this week's EngL101 notes
19:00	Study	Study - work on Phil101 assignment	Study	Study - work on Phil101 Assignment			Study - Review this week's Psych101 notes
20:00	Study	Study - cont. Working on Assignment	Study	Study			Plan & review schedule for next week
21:00	Pre-reading for Sos101		Pre-reading for Sos101				

In the above weekly schedule example has been created based on four modules. According to this example, the student only needs seven hours for his/her studies a day. The seven hours includes lectures. However, if the student has more than four modules, the hours can be increased nine hours, e.g seven modules might require nine hours depending on the university timetable.

In the case where the student has a free day, she/he use it to do other extra activities or tasks, or the student can use that as extra time for their studies.

## 5. THE PROMODORO TECHNIQUE

This section provides brief details about the **Pomodoro Technique**. It will assist you in devising means of taking breaks in-between the process of completing academic work.

The **Pomodoro Technique is a time management method developed by Francesco Cirillo in the late 1980s**. The technique uses a timer to break down work into intervals, traditionally **25 minutes** in length, separated by **short breaks** such as **10 minutes**. Each **interval** is known as a **Pomodoro**.

## ⑥ Pomodoro Steps

1

LIST ALL OF THE TASKS YOU NEED TO COMPLETE THAT DAY

2

CHOOSE A TASK TO BE ACCOMPLISHED

3

SET THE POMODORO (TIMER) TO 25 MINUTES

4

WORK ON THE TASK UNTIL THE TIMER RINGS,  
THEN PUT A TICK NEXT TO THE TASK ON YOUR LIST

5

TAKE A SHORT BREAK (5-10 MINUTES)

6

AFTER EVERY 4 POMODOROS TAKE A LONGER BREAK (15-30 MINUTES)

**REPEAT THESE STEPS UNTIL ALL THE TASKS ON YOUR LIST ARE COMPLETE!**

This website will enable you to time yourself digitally: <https://tomato-timer.com/>