# Setting Priorities: how to get the most out of your time



DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

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It can be difficult to juggle many different tasks throughout the course of a day, and it can seem like there's not enough time to get everything done. Here's a 3-step approach to feeling good about how you spend your time.

## Make a list of everything you want to accomplish in the day.

Example: Complete scholarship application Respond to Facebook wall posts Do laundry Finish Calc homework Read chapter 6 for history class Go to Dr. Smith's office hours Clean apartment Go out for dinner with friends

## Categorize each item according to its urgency and importance.

(Urgency is about how time-sensitive the task is. Importance has to do with a task's value to you.

		urgent	not urgent	
These tasks usually get our attention – but if most of your day is spent here, it can be stressful!	important	<ul> <li>a crisis or pressing problem (e.g., overflowing toilet)</li> <li>impending deadline (e.g., test tomorrow)</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>planning and preparation</li> <li>(e.g., researching a paper that's due in 3 weeks)</li> <li>true recreation/relaxation</li> </ul>	At the end of the day, time spent here is the most gratifying. These tasks tend
		(e.g., test tomorrow)	(e.g., dinner with friends)	to become urgent
These tasks are time-sensitive, but don't matter that much to you.	ant	• most interruptions (e.g., phone calls)	<ul> <li>reading junk mail</li> <li>time-fillers</li> </ul>	if you procrastinate.
If you find you're not getting enough done, you may be spending	not important	• many popular activites (e.g., responding to an IM)	(e.g., channel surfing)	Spend as little time on these tasks as possible.
too much time here.				

## Prioritize tasks to get the most out of your time.



Are you spending the bulk of your time on activities that are urgent, but not important? These can be time black holes – periods of time that just seem to disappear, without much to show for them.

See if you can shift your priorities to activities that are not urgent, but important. These tasks don't seem as pressing, but they represent the things that you really care about. At the end of the day, you'll feel that your time was well-spent.

# Use this 3-step process to prioritize tasks in your day:



#### Prioritize tasks to get the most out of your time.



Now that you've identified which tasks are a priority for you today, map them to a specific time and place in your schedule or planner.