

Time management can be defined as effectively managing your time so you can do the things you want to after completing the things you have to.

Managing your time is especially important when the combination of disease and medications may cause you to be:

- affected by fatigue and tiredness which limit the amount of energy you have to complete tasks
- stressed and depressed which make you feel overwhelmed and unable to complete tasks

All of these factors impact on your ability to think clearly and remember what you need to do to be able to self-manage yourself.

Time management is often presented as a set of skills. The theory is that once you master these skills you will be more organised, efficient and happier. When self-managing your disease it is time management that helps you to:

- remember appointments
- cook
- clean, and
- care for yourself

enabling you to maintain your health status and remain in your home environment.

The following will help you with your self-management:

Activity Diary

This is simply a list of all the activities or tasks you actually spend your time on. Keeping an activity diary for several days will help you identify:

- What you do
- When you do it
- How long it takes you, and
- How important it was

You may find that your activities and tasks are influenced by:

- Your energy levels
- Whether you have rested
- What you have eaten, and
- When you ate

It will also show you if you are planning, prioritising or procrastinating!

Planning and Prioritising

Planning is scheduling ahead of time the activities or tasks that you need and want to do. It can be done daily, weekly, monthly or even yearly. Use a diary or a wall chart diary planner to enter:

- Activities or tasks that you need and want to do each day, and when you will do them (daily planner or 'To Do' list)
- Activities or tasks that you need and want to complete each week or month, and when you will do them (short term planning)
- Activities or tasks that you need

and want to achieve that year, and when you will do them (long term planning)

Prioritising is ranking your activities or tasks in order of importance so that you complete necessary tasks before tasks of choice. By prioritising well you can reduce stress and maximise your effectiveness in living your daily life. Prioritising is a simple process that involves:

- Identifying the time you have available
- Making sure that time is allowed to complete urgent tasks and vital 'house-keeping' activities
- Writing in the planner the allocation of these time frames to achieve these essential tasks

Remember to allow for rest time and some free time, either daily or weekly for unpredictable interruptions!

Procrastination

Procrastination is when you avoid doing a task or tasks that you should be doing right now, usually in favour of doing something that is more enjoyable or that you feel more comfortable doing. When in poor health procrastination often occurs because:

- You feel overwhelmed by the task
- You may not know where to begin, or
- You may not feel physically 'up to it'

Procrastination (contd)

Unfortunately things rarely go away so it is better not to allow things to build up into a huge task and to recognise when this starts to happen. If instead of getting on with what you have to do you are:

- Filling your day with low priority tasks from your 'To Do' list
- Leaving an item on your 'To Do' list for a long time even though you know it is important, or
- Saying 'yes' to tasks that others ask you to do

then you are procrastinating!

To avoid procrastination break the task down into a series of more manageable steps. Start with those you know you can do. Remember your planning and prioritising. You will probably find that the task was not so bad after all.

Making it real - ideas to try:

- Count all your time as time to be used and make every attempt to get satisfaction out of every moment
- Find something to enjoy in whatever you do
- Learn from your mistakes

- Continually look for ways to free up your time
- Examine your old habits (like procrastination) and search for ways to change or eliminate them
- Keep a notebook with you to jot down the things you have to do or remember
- Plan your day each morning or the night before and set priorities for yourself
- Maintain and develop a list of specific things to be done each day, set your priorities, and the get the most important ones done as early in the day as you can
- Record achievements for later reflection
- Look ahead in your month and try to anticipate what is going to happen so you can schedule your time better
- Try rewarding yourself when you get things done as you had planned, especially the important tasks
- Do first things first
- Concentrate on one thing at a time
- Ask for advice or help when needed
- Be flexible
- Balance your time

The information provided assists in self-management and is intended as recommendations only. For more information please see your medical or health professional.



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