**Directions for the Time Tracker Grid for Understanding Time Management**

Time management refers to the process by which one effectively (or ineffectively) allocates his/her time, resulting in either high or low productivity. Good time management skills can be achieved through an awareness of how much time it actually takes to complete various tasks and/or activities, combined with realistic goal setting.

At the end of a long and busy work day, do you ever find yourself wondering where the time went? Have you ever been baffled by your lack of progress on your goals when you feel as though you have been working hard all day/week/month? While each of us probably have a wide range of “to do” lists, the one thing that we all have in common is time. There are only 24 hours in a day, and 7 days in a week (5 days in the typical full-time work week). How is it that we never seem to have enough time to get things done?

A first step in an actual attempt to answer these looming questions is to figure out exactly how we spend our time, each week, each day, each hour. Keeping a time log is an easy way to track how much time we spend doing daily activities. Do you know how much time you spend on routine activities such as sleeping, eating (and all that goes into its preparation – shopping, cooking, washing dishes, etc.), personal grooming and commuting? Have you ever kept track of your work days, such as emailing, writing, reading, thinking, and, yes, running experiments in the lab?

In order to get the most out of this workshop on Time Management, please take a few days, or even a week, to track your time. There is an hour tracking time template below. In each box (and they are very small), record your activity for that hour. If something, such as sleep, or dinner takes more than an hour, you might run a line down the center of the block to the time that you complete the activity. Try to record your activity as accurately as possible. The more detailed your account, the better you will understand how you spend your time. Once you can see where the time has gone, it will be easier to decide how to cut corners and shift your routine and activities so that you can free up time to get done what you have been unable to complete.

Adapted from Academic Skills Center, Dartmouth College 2001

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