Life is better when you have time to sleep:
Time management strategies for graduate students

Image from http://www.entrepreneurs-journey.com/996/why-entrepreneurs-need-to-invent-their-own-time-management-systems/

What is time management?

Time management is the *intentional* act of planning and arranging the amount of time spent on specific activities in an effort *to increase your effectiveness, efficiency, or productivity*.

Time management is working smarter, not harder.

Why is time management important?

- Graduate school can be overwhelming – lots to do but unstructured time to do it
- Allows you to do your best work and achieve your goals
- Sets good habits
- Provides limits (on social media, on sitting, on perfectionism)
- Provides reminders (to explore your host country, to let your mind wander, to have fun)

Typical Time Management Challenges for Graduate Students

- Not identifying priorities (or the wrong priorities)
- Not scheduling these priorities first
- Not keeping a list of tasks
- Having unrealistic sense of how long things will take to do well
- Overscheduling or too rigid of a schedule
- Saying "Yes! Yes! Yes!" to every opportunity

Tips for managing time

1. Start your day by looking at your calendar and your to-do list rather than your inbox.
2. Turn off distractions and don't live your life by default.
3. Plan for interruptions.
4. Only check Facebook, social media, or email a few times per day and schedule those times.
5. Take time to rest and recuperate.

Reference: http://www.prioritymanagement.com/nsw/resources/resource.php?resource_id=151

Why do we procrastinate?

1. We want instant gratification.

2. We're afraid.

3. We get paralysed by perfectionism.

4. We're avoiding growing up.

5. We overestimate our future self.

6. We want to do too much.

Reference: http://www.yourcoach.be/en/blog/index.php/6-surprising-causes-procrastination/

Why prioritize?

- **Efficiency and effectiveness are not the same**. People who work hard and are well organized but spend all their time on unimportant tasks may be efficient but not effective.

- To be effective, you need to decide what tasks are urgent and important and to focus on these. This is called **prioritizing**.

- It's important to list the tasks you have and to sort these in order of priority, and then to devote most time to the most important tasks. This avoids the natural tendency to concentrate on the simple, easy tasks and to allow too many interruptions to your work.

The Importance of Lists

- Feeding your elephants (big important stuff) and starving the ants (trivia)
- Lists are an important first step in prioritizing and time management. Start each day with a to-do list and work the small additional items into the plan for the day.
  - Give each activity that is important and urgent an A.
  - Assign a B to important tasks that aren't urgent.
  - Finally, place a C by anything you would like to do but doesn't carry any urgency or importance.

Order of Priorities

- **Classes** – set in stone; make sure to include professor's office hours at least twice a month; don't forget exams and paper due dates.
- **Sleep** – you have to sleep; you're inefficient if you don't sleep and eat
- **Meals** – ditto
- **Reading/Studying for Exams** – decide how you best read/study; at home, in the library; in a café; make sure to be realistic about travel time (especially to class); you can read an average 3 pages per hour but measure yourself
- **Writing** – always budget in time for writing (not just before due dates), so you can get a draft to your peers or instructor; again – where and how do you work best?

Order of Priorities - continued

- **Writing Process**
  - proposal
  - outline
  - first draft
  - editing and proofreading
- Breaks – work in fifteen minute, half hour or hour intervals; Scientifically, it is known that 45 minutes work followed by a 10 minutes rest is the best for the average studier.
- Schedule in B and C items
- Free Time – balance the discipline of the calendar with rewards. Don't forget socializing.

Scheduling Help

Calendars that work!

http://www.calendarsthatwork.com/calendar.php?calendarId=weekLDt1

Pomodoro

https://pomodoro-tracker.com/