

Tips for Time Management

Prioritizing

People really can't do *everything*, and shouldn't feel like they have to. Studies come first. Beyond that, teens should pick the things they truly care about. You can start by limiting themselves to two after-school activities a week, or whatever comfortable (but no more than one a day). You should feel free to try new things, but shouldn't say yes to every opportunity that comes their way.

Having a System

You'll be amazed how much time is gained when you don't have to search for your stuff, or when you know exactly what your plans are ahead of time. It helps to organize everything—from homework assignments to soccer cleats – the night before. You should also suggest having – and sticking to!-- a color-coded schedule for every day of the week. Penciling in time for food, friends, and fun is important, too. Reward yourself [for sticking to your schedule and meeting your goals] by going to the mall with a friend or watching a movie.

Just Doing It

Sometimes teens get nervous about all the things they have to get done, and end up spending two hours facebooking instead of working. Then people stress about how now they *really* don't have time to finish anything, which just leaves them feeling anxious and drained. In other words, procrastination is one of the biggest obstacles to good time management. It takes will power to stop this cycle, but doing so will make each day go a lot smoother. You need to learn not to spend time and energy stressing over how they have no time—just do what needs to get done.

Taking Care of Oneself

Yawning during class. Glazed eyes at the dinner table. Inattention at practice. Sound familiar? Chances are that teens like this are not taking good care of their bodies. The Diet Coke and Milky Way bar at recess may give teens a momentary boost, but they'll actually make a person feel worse in the long run. Those late night cramming sessions also take their toll.

Sometimes you may think "I *already* don't have enough time to do what I want and need to do, and you want me to take more time to eat and sleep?!" But the fact is that you feel sharper and more energetic – in other words, are able to do more stuff in the same amount of time—when they give their bodies enough rest and the right kind of fuel.

Making it a habit!

Sticking to a schedule can be tough at first, but it's worth the trouble. After about three weeks of following a time management system, it will become second nature.