

Managing Your Time in Law School

Time management in law school can be very difficult. It may feel like you have no time at all, but there are ways that you can find a balance between getting work done and having a personal life. While it can be difficult, here are some ways you can manage your time:

- ★ **Work Before Play!** One of the hardest parts about adjusting to law school is realizing that school really does have to come first. There will be times when your friends want to hang out and do something fun, but if there is work to be done and if going out with your friends will put you behind, you have to be able to say no and carry on working in order to stay on top of everything. The more you stay on top of the school work the better chance you will be able to go and have fun without falling behind or feeling guilty.
- ★ **Do Not Disturb.** Your phone can be a huge distraction. While maintaining relationships during law school is important, it is best to put your phone on do not disturb in order to ensure that you are not distracted while trying to get work done. Giving into distractions will only draw out the process and make it so you have to work longer as a result of the constant interruptions from your phone.
- ★ **The Age-Old “Don’t Procrastinate.”** We all get tired of hearing it, but not procrastinating helps tremendously with law school. Starting to study or starting a paper sooner rather than later allows you to take your time and move slowly, ensuring your studying/work is as productive as possible. Starting papers earlier, in particular, allows you to spend maybe one hour on it a day, and then allows you to look at the paper with fresh eyes each time you return.
- ★ **Use a Planner or Calendar.** A whiteboard calendar, an online calendar, or a planner will allow you to visually see what it is you have to do and helps keep track of everything you need to accomplish by a certain time. Sometimes, when you become overwhelmed and think you have no time to accomplish everything, making a calendar that fits in everything can help you see that it is possible to accomplish everything on time.
- ★ **Find a Routine.** Establishing a routine can help alleviate stress and ensure that you are using your time efficiently. A routine that allows you to get all of your work done in a timely manner should not be interrupted because it allows you to work at your own consistent pace and lessens the chances of rushing through tasks.
- ★ **Flipped Schedule.** The normal semester of law school can be very busy and hectic, but it is manageable as long as you manage your time and make sure you give yourself a break. One way to do this is by following a flipped schedule, meaning you do all of the reading for the upcoming week during the weekend before. While this does take up a lot of your weekend time, it frees up a lot of the week and eliminates the stress of trying to rush and read right before class. An example of a flipped schedule could be Torts on Friday, Civil Procedure on Saturday, and Contracts on Sunday. Or you could do Monday’s readings on Friday, Tuesday and Wednesday’s readings on Saturday, and Thursday’s readings on Sunday. This frees up your week to outline, work on LCR, review, and take time for yourself.

- ★ **Take Breaks.** Scheduling breaks for yourself, whether it is for a meal or a shower or just some phone time, can help recharge your brain. It is important to take breaks even when they are not scheduled if it feels like your brain is too tired to learn or retain any information. When it gets to that point, it is essentially a waste of your time to try to power through it and it is a better use of your time to take a break and allow yourself to recharge.
- ★ **Find Your Productive Time.** Some people are more productive during the night, some prefer mornings, and some people work best midday. Find which time is productive for you and plan your days accordingly.
- ★ **Use a Timer.** If you are having a hard time focusing for a longer period of time, sometimes it helps to set a timer on your phone. Set the timer, move the phone across the room from you and focus until the timer goes off. Once that timer goes off, you can take a break.
- ★ **Give Yourself a Day Off.** In the beginning, it can seem like reading for the week will take you forever. By using a flipped schedule, once you get the hang of the readings and are able to do them quicker, you can allow yourself to take a day, such as Sundays, off from school. With this built in flexibility, if you want to go have fun on a Saturday night you can do that and not have to worry about how it will affect your productivity on Sunday. Further, if you would prefer to do something on a Friday night, you can always opt to take Saturday off that week.