

Creating a Foundation for Daily Success: Time Management



What is time management? Time management means taking charge of how you use your time.

Why bother? To help make sure you are using your limited time on things that are most important to you, keeping your goals in mind. It also helps you decide what to do and when to do it. It is the key to getting more done with less stress.

How do you develop effective time management?

- 1. Time estimation:** Estimating the time that tasks will take helps predict time more accurately and improves planning ability. For example, I can plan to meet you at 4:00 P.M. and arrive on time if I accurately predict that my 3:00 P.M. tutoring session will only run 45 minutes and accurately predict that it takes 15 minutes to get to you.
- 2. Time scheduling:** Helps you make sure you are protecting time to do what you intend to do. Develop and maintain a routine by filling in specific tasks within specific time slots. Schedule each time block based on how long *you* personally can work on that activity before losing steam. (For example, organize your evening assignments from 5:00 to 5:15 P.M., study time between 5:15 and 5:45 P.M., take a 15-minute break, have dinner from 6:00 to 7:00 P.M., schedule more study time from 7:00 to 7:30 P.M., break, study from 8:30 to 9:00 P.M., complete DBT diary card from 9:00 to 9:05 P.M., and relax and do bedtime routine from 9:05 to 10 P.M.)
- 3. Time verification:** Throughout the day, predict the current time frequently and then **check the actual time!** This ongoing practice will help you see how far off you are and get you better at tracking time.

(continued)

Based on *The Organized Child* (Gallagher, Spira, & Rosenblatt, 2018; The Guilford Press), *Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy for Adult ADHD* (Solanto, 2011; The Guilford Press), and *Smart but Scattered, Second Edition* (Dawson, Guare, & Guare, 2025; The Guilford Press).

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TIME ESTIMATION EXERCISE

List common things you anticipate you will do in a day, estimate how long each activity will take, and then write down the actual time each activity took. *Then keep practicing multiple times for each activity you picked!*

Activity	Predicted time 1	Actual time 1	Predicted time 2	Actual time 2	Predicted time 3	Actual time 3
Shower	5 minutes	19 minutes	10 minutes	20 minutes	15 minutes	18 minutes

TIME SCHEDULING EXERCISE

Time schedule a specific day: Start with fixed commitments (classes, free period, lunch, work, doctors' appointments, DBT skills homework, sports/music/clubs). Don't forget transitions, meals, and breaks.

Time block	Task
7:00-7:20 a.m.	Shower
11:00 p.m.	

TIME VERIFICATION EXERCISE

Without looking, guess what the exact time is right now: _____

Now, check the actual time and fill it in: _____

Do this several times randomly throughout the day:

Your guess: _____	Actual time: _____
Your guess: _____	Actual time: _____
Your guess: _____	Actual time: _____
Your guess: _____	Actual time: _____