

37 managing your time

for you to know

Not having enough time to do things and always being late are habits that can raise your anxiety level. When you can learn to manage your time appropriately, it is easier to stay peaceful.

Marissa was frequently anxious because she was running late for things. She was in the pep club, student council, soccer, and the ecology club. She also babysat and taught Sunday school. At home she was responsible for cleaning her room, vacuuming, and taking out the recycling. She had so many activities that she had to stay up very late to get all her homework done. That made it hard for her to wake up in the morning, so she was often late for school. After she had had three detentions for being late to her first class, the assistant principal, Ms. Barnes, called Marissa into her office. They had a talk about Marissa's situation, and Ms. Barnes said that Marissa needed to learn how to manage her time better. She taught Marissa the following four steps for time management:

Step 1: Scheduling

Before you make plans or take on another activity or responsibility, check your schedule. See what else you are doing that day. Do you have time to do another activity? Commit to only as much as you have time for.

Step 2: Recording

Choose a scheduling tool in which you will record everything that you have to do. Some scheduling tools include calendars, electronic organizers, day planner books, or assignment books. Always check your schedule before you make a plan, and as soon as you schedule something, record it.

Step 3: Checking

Every morning when you first get up, check your schedule to see what you have to do that day. If you need extra help remembering, write yourself reminder notes and leave them where you will see them. Every time you think about making a commitment to do something, check your schedule to see if you have enough time. Check your schedule throughout the day to make sure you are remembering your commitments.

Step 4: Planning Ahead

Think ahead. Don't wait until the last minute to do things. Make sure you allow yourself enough time for each task or commitment.

The next day, Marissa tried the four-step plan. When her friend Becca asked her to go to the movies that night, Marissa's first thought was to say yes. But then she got out her day planner. She saw that she already had a student council meeting and she had to study for a math test that night. Then she looked ahead two days and saw that Friday evening was free. She and Becca decided to go to the movies on Friday instead. Marissa wrote it in her planner right away. She also made a note to come home right after soccer practice on Friday instead of stopping for pizza with the team like she usually did. She realized that if she went out for pizza, she wouldn't have time to shower and change and be ready to go to the movie when Becca picked her up. Just to make sure she didn't forget, she wrote herself a note and put it in the duffel bag she always took to soccer practice. Marissa felt her anxiety level drop already, just knowing that she wouldn't have to rush around.

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directions

Make seven copies of the planning page below. For the next week, practice scheduling all of your commitments, from test dates to after-school activities to chores.

Day _____	Date _____
5 A.M.	_____
6 A.M.	_____
7 A.M.	_____
8 A.M.	_____
9 A.M.	_____
10 A.M.	_____
11 A.M.	_____
12 noon	_____
1 P.M.	_____
2 P.M.	_____
3 P.M.	_____
4 P.M.	_____
5 P.M.	_____
6 P.M.	_____
7 P.M.	_____
8 P.M.	_____
9 P.M.	_____
10 P.M.	_____
11 P.M.	_____
12 midnight	_____

more to do

Describe what it was like for you to keep the planning pages.

Tell how keeping the planning pages affected your anxiety level.

Which of the four time-management steps is the easiest for you to accomplish, and why?

Which of the four time-management steps do you need the most help with, and why?

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Describe what you could do to help yourself achieve the step that is hardest for you.

Tell which scheduling tool works the best for you, and why.
