
Managing Your Day with a Smartphone App

One of the challenges in organizing life as a student is distributing your coursework into a manageable daily workload throughout the semester. Dividing major assignments, exam preparation, course reading and regular review into a series of daily tasks helps in planning a balanced daily schedule. It also reduces stress by making sure you have scheduled enough time to complete each day's work.

Many time management tools are available online. Wunderlist is one of the free tools available. You can use it online, as a computer application, and on smartphones. This allows you to create your to-do lists on the computer, and have an easily accessible list on your phone to guide daily planning.

Steps to setting up a student time management system on a smartphone application

1. Create a free account at www.wunderlist.com Similar App tools include Remember the Milk (www.rememberthemilk.com) and Toodledo (www.toodledo.com).
2. Download the application to your computer and smartphone as desired. You may also create and access your task lists online.
3. Create a new list for each course you are taking. You may also create a separate list for any major assignments that have multiple steps. You may wish to group related lists together in a folder. To do this, drag the lists on top of one another. A folder will be created automatically.
4. Add content to your lists:
 - a. Add a new item for every task that you need to do. For example, in a psychology course you may have the following tasks: (1) read and take notes on textbook chapter 1, (2) review lecture notes from Monday's class, (3) prepare flashcards from this week's study material, (4) prepare reading summary for Wednesday's class. The system will work best if you create distinct, small tasks that can be done in a single work session, rather than larger tasks. Add each task as a separate item in your list.
 - b. For major assignments, divide the larger project into smaller tasks. For example, when writing a research paper: (1) search journal databases and find five relevant articles, (2) take notes on articles 1-3, (3) take notes on articles (4-5), (4) create an outline for the paper, (5) write the first draft of the paper, (6) proofread the paper and make revisions, (7) prepare the reference list, (8) complete final editing and print the paper. Each task should be separate item in your list.
 - c. After you have completed your lists, assign a due date to each item. This will help you keep yourself accountable to meeting your study goals for each day. To set a due date, click on the item, and select a date from the calendar as your deadline. You may also set reminders to start your tasks ahead of the due date.
 - d. If there are tasks that occur on a regular basis, you can set them to repeat automatically on your lists. Under the calendar view, set the task to repeat daily, weekly, or monthly as appropriate.
5. Open the application as you begin each day's work. All items assigned to that day will be listed in the *Today* view. You can preview the work assigned to the week as well in the weekly view.
6. As you work through the tasks assigned to the day, you will be rewarded by checking off each task as it is completed. At the end of each day, preview the items on tomorrow's list. Add any additional items that are needed.

As with any time management system, smartphone apps will only be beneficial if you regularly use them. Get started and see if using a time management app will be effective for you.

