One of the greatest challenges for college students is to organize and use their time efficiently in order to get the maximum return from their study time. Organizing and prioritizing your tasks and activities is crucial in managing your time efficiently. In addition, to increase productive study time, try to eliminate losing time. The following checklist suggests some ways to help you avoid letting valuable study time slip away.

1. **Do you lose time through diversion?**
   Do you sacrifice prime study time with personal diversions? For example, do you use the prime morning hours when you feel the freshest to do laundry rather than doing the laundry after classes later in the afternoon when you’re less likely to be motivated or less alert for maximum studying effectiveness? Set priorities and accomplish the important think first and then work in other details to your overall time management plan. Do you put off studying by rationalizing that other activities are more important? For example, do you put off studying lingering too long over coffee or reading the morning paper during your break between classes when the time may be better used reviewing or preparing for a class? Budget your time and constantly screen your priority by applying standards to determine how important tasks and activities are? Avoid spending unnecessary hours whiling away the time and avoiding study.

2. **Do you set reasonably, realistic goals in setting the times to study?**
   First, do you schedule your study times when you are the most alert and effective? Some people function better in the early morning while others function better late at night. If you are a morning person and you force yourself to study at night, you will be tired and not be spending your time productively. Second, are you realistic in setting goals? Setting a goal like “I’ll get at 6:30 AM on Saturday to study” may be difficult to stick to.

3. **Do you lose time in getting started?**
   Even though you set aside time to study, do you have trouble getting started? Some students take longer getting “warmed up” to study. For example, studying vocabulary for foreign language learning may take some students’ longer time to get started than reading a history chapter.

4. **Do you lose time through disorganization?**
   Do you decide what courses to study first and systematically plan and prioritize what you need to accomplish during your study period? Don’t try to accomplish too many tasks or activities during a specific time frame. Often, it’s better to study the most difficult or most boring course first. After completing your study goals within a specific time period, reward yourself by turning your attention to something that you enjoy, like reading a magazine or whatever.

5. **Do you lose time through excessive involvement?**
   Do you get bogged down in pursuing details after you have already absorbed the key ideas or work so long on something that you are mentally getting nowhere? You need to know when to stop. If you are tired, change to some other activity rather than forcing yourself to keep going. If you are stuck on a problem, stop and go back to it later; you’ll discover that you can usually solve it more quickly later rather than wasting two or three hours stewing over it. Establish criteria to decide how deeply you need to go into given assignment. Plan to systematically absorb the main ideas and supporting details to enable you to understand and apply the information especially at exam time.

(over)
6. **Do you lose time in reading?**
Do you screen your reading materials to eliminate unnecessary or unproductive matter? Many Students Faced with long reading lists start with book #1, finish two out of six books, feel guilty that they haven’t managed to get through the others, give up and hope for luck to help them succeed in the exams. Develop your skimming and scanning techniques so that you effectively take in major concepts from your reading; then decide what is necessary to study in depth and read more carefully. Skim for main ideas and then review them carefully but selectively in order to be more effective and remember more. Practice rapid reading techniques to improve both your speed and comprehension so that you will be able to get more ideas in less time.

7. **Do you lose time in writing?**
Do you make simple outline for writing assignments and make more detailed outline for major writing task such as term papers? Do you have an identifiable goal in writing the thesis you are attempting to prove or have clearly in mind the major concept before you start writing? Do you get to the point, simply and directly? When answering essay test questions, do you tack a few minutes to jot down the major points you are going to discuss?

8. **Do you short cut to save time?**
Do you eliminate work done out of habit which no longer serves any useful purpose? Ask yourself” Is this really necessary?” For example, copying down from the textbook to your notebook all major terms or concepts and then retyping all your class notes may be a habit that takes too much to your time. Streamline your studying by cutting out non-essentials. Combine records – for example, in your lecture notebook, leave every other page blank so that you can make notes from your text reading to fill in the gaps or to expand on important points.