


# Prioritizing — the right way

Healthy time management goes hand in hand with a healthy sleep routine. When you're busy, it's easy to think you'll just cut out sleep — but that will just make things worse!

This tool shows one way you can prioritize everything you have to do. Think about each task and commitment you have and decide which category is the best fit: Urgent and Important, Important and Not Urgent, Urgent and Not Important, and Not Urgent and Not Important.

Avoid things that fall into sections III and IV and prioritize section I and II.

Here's an example of how someone might sort their upcoming tasks:

	Urgent	Not urgent
Important	<p><b>I.</b>  <b>Deadlines</b> (<i>homework, exams, projects</i>)  <b>Crises</b>  <b>Pressing problems</b></p> <p>Science mid-term tomorrow            Take out the garbage tonight            Homework due by 5<sup>th</sup> period            Find Sam to apologize for missing game</p>	<p><b>II.</b>  <b>Healthy habits</b>   <i>(sleep, exercise, hygiene, social time)</i>  <b>Commitments</b> (<i>practice, clubs, etc.</i>)</p> <p>Spend 30 minutes exercising outside after school            Start drafting personal statement for college applications            Read 1 chapter of book for English class each night            Start sleep wind-down routine by 9:30 pm</p>
Not important	<p><b>III.</b>  <b>Interruptions</b>  <i>(text messages, social media notification)</i></p> <p>Respond to notifications            Talking to friends during study time</p>	<p><b>IV.</b>  <b>Busy work</b>  <b>Mindless activities</b>  <i>(scrolling social media, watching TV)</i></p> <p>Paint nails            Post pictures from vacation            Catch up TV show            Video games</p>

# Short on time?



## 1. Think preventively

- a. Define your priorities:
  - i. Homework, study for exam, attending class
  - ii. Practice, competitions, travel
  - iii. Clubs, hanging out with friends, family commitments
- b. Schedule time for what is most important to you:
  - i. Block out time in advance using a daily planner or calendar
  - ii. Don't forget to schedule time for healthy habits, such as sleep and exercise.
- c. Be ready to adapt:
  - i. Review your schedule each morning for any unanticipated tasks
  - ii. Take time to think through all of your commitments every couple months to see if your priorities have changed.

## 2. Put first things first

- a. Organize your day around what is most important and stick to your plan!
- b. Have a plan to deal with distractions - put your phone where you can't see it or go to a quiet room when it is time to focus.
- c. Effective people seek to cut out distractions (items that fall into section III and IV of the grid). By planning ahead, more of your tasks and commitments will fall into section II because you can take care of things before they become urgent.



**Scan this QR code**  
to watch Dr. Anne Morse,  
Pediatric Neurology and Sleep  
specialist explain the link  
between time management  
and sleep health.



## Give it a try!

Think about all the different responsibilities you have – school, work, friends, family, clubs, personal time, etc. Write down the things you have to do over the next week to be at your best in each area:

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Next, decide where each task belongs on the grid below and write it down:

	Urgent	Not urgent
Important	<p><b>I.</b>  <b>Deadlines</b> (<i>homework, exams, projects</i>)  <b>Crises</b>  <b>Pressing problems</b></p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p><b>II.</b>  <b>Healthy habits</b>  <i>sleep, exercise, hygiene, social time</i>  <b>Commitments</b> (<i>practice, clubs, etc.</i>)</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Not important	<p><b>III.</b>  <b>Interruptions</b>  <i>(text messages, social media notification)</i></p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p><b>IV.</b>  <b>Busy work</b>  <b>Mindless activities</b>  <i>(scrolling social media, watching TV)</i></p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

# Plan your week based on what's important to you.



Start by blocking time for tasks from the **Important and Urgent** column. Then move onto the **Important and Not Urgent** tasks, the **Urgent and Not Important** tasks, and finally the **Not Important and Not Urgent** tasks.

When you make time for Important and Not Urgent things now, you'll have fewer Important and Urgent tasks in the future.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
6:00 am							
7:00 am							
8:00 am							
9:00 am							
10:00 am							
11:00 am							
12:00 pm							
1:00 pm							
2:00 pm							
3:00 pm							
4:00 pm							
5:00 pm							
6:00 pm							
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11:00 pm							