

8 Ways to Take Control of Your Future, according to The College Board

1. Make a to-do list every day

Put the most important tasks at the top, even if they're things you're dreading, and tackle them first. Include things you want to do on your list too, so you have items you're looking forward to. Try motivating yourself with a reward if you get to everything on your list.

2. Keep your work with you

That way, if you find yourself with extra time—while on the train or bus or waiting for an appointment—you can get something done.

3. Don't be afraid to say no

It's OK to say no if your friend asks you to go to a movie one night but you have a test the next morning. Instead, find a time that works for both of you and go see the movie then.

4. Find your productive time

Are you a morning person or a night person? You'll be more efficient if you work when you're at your best.

5. Create a dedicated study time

Set up a time devoted only to studying or homework. Shut off your phone and respond to calls or texts when your work is finished. Don't check email or surf the Web (except when you need to for the work you're doing) during this time either.

6. Budget your time

Figure out how much time you usually spend on your activities and then create a weekly schedule to follow. Determine how much free time you have before you add any commitments. And don't forget to schedule time to relax.

7. Don't get sidetracked

If you find yourself wasting time on unimportant things, stop, check your to-do list and get back to what's at the top. Maybe you're procrastinating because you're not sure how to move forward on a school project. If that's the problem, check with your teacher to clear things up so you can get moving.

8. Get a good night's sleep

Your brain needs rest to perform at its peak. If it's time to sleep, list the things you still need to get done on the next day's to-do list and go to bed.