

Using Your Calendar

Every modern teen, procrastinator or not, needs the help of an external guide to help you see that which you cannot picture in your head—where you stand in time.

Step 1: Create a timeline.

I encourage you to take ten minutes or so to block out all your commitments on a calendar app or paper calendar. This includes your classes, extracurricular activities, social plans, trips, even personal downtime. This will allow you to see at a glance what time blocks are still available to you. Without knowing what time is available for future work sessions, you cannot plan for them accurately.

Step 2: Define your deadline.

Identify a task that you want to tackle and commit to a deadline. For example, if you have a quiz that is announced, enter the date and time of the quiz on your calendar at your first opportunity. Classify each task or event by color to indicate importance. For example, you can classify highest priority tasks to appear in red.

Step 3: Schedule your sessions.

Make a quick evaluation of how long you'll need to complete each task or prepare for each event. If you think a task will take two hours, it might be a good idea to allow yourself four thirty-minute sessions to work on the task, spreading them out over the week. If you are a warrior, use the "double down" rule; schedule twice as many blocks of time as you think you will need. If it turns out you don't need them all, you can always delete them.

Step 4: Set alerts.

Set three alerts for each session. Set one alert five minutes before each session, to give yourself time to prepare a workspace and eliminate distractions. Then set one alert as a signal to start the task, and set one more alert to let you know when to stop working. *Don't skip this essential step!*

Step 5: Share your calendar (optional).

It may be helpful, especially for the pleaser, to share knowledge of some of your commitments with others. Letting others know what you will be doing and when you'll be doing it can help you own the task. Shared calendars can also let others know when you don't want to be disturbed, and help them understand why you are not responding to them during those times.

If you don't have a personal calendar or smartphone calendar app, no problem! Here's a calendar template you can print out to help you get started.

MONDAY Date:	TUESDAY Date:	WEDNESDAY Date:	THURSDAY Date:	FRIDAY Date:	SATURDAY Date:	SUNDAY Date:
7-8						
8-9						
9-10						
10-11						
11-12						
12-1						
1-2						
2-3						
3-4						
4-5						
5-6						
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10-11						