How can graduate students stay sane when they're overloaded with courses, research, teaching, and a life? Effective time management can make the difference between a job well done and a job done half-way or not at all. This section explains how to set priorities, time limits, and other boundaries around your work. By implementing some of these tips, you will increase control, reduce stress, and accomplish more every day.

- **Use a calendar**: It’s critical to keep a calendar if you want to stick to your schedule. Whether you’re using a paper calendar, your smart phone, or the calendar linked with your Brown email, color coding helps you to keep track of different obligations and to deal with time conflicts when they arise (e.g. red for their own course activities, green for teaching assistant tasks, and blue for personal appointments).

- **Go with your flow**: Think about your biological peaks and lows. Are you a morning person? Do you work best at night? Plan your day accordingly. Save your most difficult work for the times when you’re at your best. Identify the length of time you can typically maintain optimal concentration—say, 3 hours—and schedule your tasks as sessions instead of number of hours.

- **Break large assignments and tasks into their component parts**: Any project becomes more manageable when broken down into its constituent parts. If you’re writing a paper, for example, devote clearly defined segments of time to each of these activities: finding a topic, conducting literature searches, gathering articles and books, reading and taking notes, writing an outline, writing the first draft, and revising. Set realistic deadlines for each stage of completing a major assignment (e.g., an article).

- **Schedule time to organize and evaluate your time management plan**: Designate a day and time each week to review your calendar. Sunday afternoon is often a good time to do this. Note upcoming assignments, adjusting times and task priorities as appropriate. This one step will go a long way in enabling you to stick to your schedule.

- **Take advantage of free time**: Commuting, standing in line at the grocery store, waiting for appointments—we all spend time waiting for something or getting somewhere. These spots of time can be used to take a mental break, to chat with others, or to fit in small bits of work. Carry work with you that you can focus on in such circumstances. Or use the time to write in your planner and organize yourself. Whether you use the time as a refreshing break of to get work done, it is time well spent.

- **Reward yourself**: As you meet discrete goals that move you toward the completion of a larger objective, reward yourself. Take a bath, go to a movie, have dinner with friends, or engage in some activity that you consciously use to mark your achievement. These little rewards will motivate you to accomplish smaller tasks and therefore stick to your schedule.

**ONLINE RESOURCES**

- “Academic Scientists at Work: Where’d my Day go?” http://sciencecareers.sciencemag.org/career_development/previous_issues/articles/2940/academic_scientists_at_work_where_d_my_day_go/
- The Five Virtues of Successful Grad Students: http://chronicle.com/article/The-5-Virtues-of-Successful/5060/
- Succeeding in Grad School: http://www.washington.edu/doit/Brochures/Academics/grad_school.html