

'The ABC System'

Time Management Technique 3

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Using this technique:

When?

When you are feeling overwhelmed by all the work you need to complete or you have a large piece of work like an assignment to tackle.

How?

- look at the work you need to do and decide what the most urgent tasks are
- for assignments, break the task down and decide what the first steps are that you need to take
- prioritise the steps into A B C
- complete step A fully before moving onto step B or any other task
- complete A B and C before re-evaluating what needs to be done next

Why?

By narrowing your focus to the most urgent tasks and completing these fully you are making the most efficient use of your time.

Could you benefit from this technique?



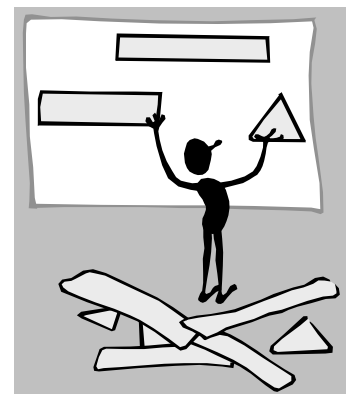
For You To Do:

1. Have you ever:
 - a) had a really important piece of work to do and did everything except that task? _____
 - b) just jumped back and forth between a number of pieces of work without achieving anything much? _____
 - c) felt overwhelmed by everything you needed to do and were unable to actually start anything? _____
 - d) stared at the assignment you needed to do and not started because it just felt too big to start? _____

Something to think about:

Research has confirmed that when you have many things competing for your attention and many things to do, ranking them according to their importance and then working on each item in order until it is completed is the most efficient way to work.

It is better to break tasks down into manageable steps that are easier to tackle. There is no point worrying about the huge amount you need to complete - all this does is makes you stressed and unable to get anything completed.



Instead, choose 3 specific tasks to complete. Don't think about anything else until you have completed these tasks. Once these are done, choose the next 3.

About this technique:

The ABC technique is all about finding a focus. Instead of feeling overwhelmed by everything you need to do or the enormity of an assignment, you decide on Step A, Step B and Step C and then focus solely on completing these in order – not moving onto the next step until the first one on the list is completed. Once these three are completed, you then decide the next ABC to take. If you have a number of large assignments to do, you may decide to determine what is the ABC or first three steps for each task. Then allocate a time to work on each of these assignments. Be strict with yourself and don't move onto step C until step B is completed or step B until step A is completed.

**For You To Do:**

Summarise this technique into the three main steps in your own words:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

“In the time you spend worrying about everything you need to do you could have completed a large number of the tasks that you have been worrying about.”

**For You To Do:**

To get yourself started, think about an assignment, large piece of homework, or an upcoming test.

Describe the task:

What are some of the things you will need to do for this task (list as many as you can think of):

What are the first three things or most important steps for this task:

A.

B.

C.

'Conquer the Clutter'

Time Management Technique 9

Page 1

Using this technique:

When?

On a regular basis – at the end of each evening before you go to bed.

How?

- sort through the material on your workspace
- throw away (or recycle) any rubbish
- file away anything you are finished with
- put neatly into piles the things you need to work on tomorrow

Why?

When the first thing you have to do before you start work is to rearrange the clutter, you are making it much more difficult for yourself to start and make the best use of your time.

Could you benefit from this technique?



For You To Do:

1. Is your workspace organised and uncluttered? _____
2. Do you have shelves or drawers etc for filing? _____
3. Can you always find everything you need? _____
4. Do you waste time looking for things? _____
5. Do you paste in sheets and file away handouts? _____
6. Do you sort everything out at the end of the day? _____
7. Do you attempt to control the clutter in your room? _____

Something to think about:

When you keep your workspace decluttered you feel more energetic, energised and inspired to work. Ending the day with things sorted, cleared and prepared ready to go for the next day gives you a good sense of closure and a feeling of completion. Coming the next day to a clearly organised work space makes it easier to focus on what is important for that day rather than having to deal with the leftovers of the previous day. This gives you greater energy, focus and direction. Chaos in your room tends to make you feel out of control.



Everything on your desktop should be there for a reason. Have things you use daily and on a recurring basis like stationery ready at hand. Anything not being used daily, stick into a drawer. You want to keep an open working space.

About this technique:

It is hard to manage things stacked up in huge piles all over the place or scattered haphazardly across your desk. Allow yourself a set amount of time to go through the piles and papers on (and around) your desk at the end of the day. For everything you pick up decide to either a) trash it; b) file it; c) act on it now; d) leave it for tomorrow. Take the time to file and put away the excess papers. Don't leave them till later as they will just mount up and become more and more uninspiring. Make clear piles for work you need to do the next day – one way to do this is to put neat piles on your floor so you can clearly see the jobs for tomorrow. You can also arrange the piles in order of importance so the next day you know exactly what you need to start on.

**For You To Do:**

Summarise this technique into the three main steps in your own words:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

“Clutter that starts off small seems to expand until it has a life of its own. Deal with clutter by organising and filing your papers regularly. Remember, filing is not about storage – it is about retrieval: about being able to find something quickly and easily when you need it.”

**For You To Do:**

Allocate an hour this week to reduce the clutter in your room and working space.

- 1) First ensure you have a clear desk space to work on. Get rid of stationery that you aren't using every day by placing it in a desk drawer or a plastic storage tub.
- 2) Clear space for a noticeboard or find somewhere you can prominently place important pieces of paper or notes.
- 3) Look at where you store things for school. Do you need to buy some more folders? Are the folders you have labelled clearly?

At the end of each evening this week, take 10-15 minutes to sort through what is on your desk and either a) trash it; b) file it; c) act on it now; or d) sort it into clear priority piles for tomorrow.