

Time Management and Organizational Skills

*Setting Students Up for Success Now and in the
Future*

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Topics Reviewed:

What is Organization and Why is it Important?

Developing Organizational Skills

Tips/Technology to Support Organization

Agenda Tips

Physical Organization Suggestions

Time Management Strategies

Writing/Reviewing Notes

Study Skills for Older students

Possible Study Techniques

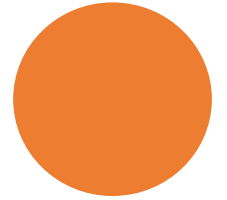
Workstation Ideas

Questions??

What is organization?

Organizational skills are your abilities to manage time effectively, prioritize tasks, set goals, and develop systems for achieving those goals.

Part of organization is understanding the requirements of the task. Being 'organized' is a crucial skill not only for academic success but for life.



Whether being organized comes naturally to you or it's a little more work to get into that frame of mind, it's important to remember that **anyone** can be organized – it's a skill that can be **learned** and used as a strategy for success in school and elsewhere in life.





Helping Student Develop Organizational Skills:

Teaching children how to organize their schoolwork can be broken down into three areas:

1. **Outline the project:** At the start of an assignment, students should create an outline what the project is, determine what items are needed to complete the assignment, create checklists to keep them on task and get a sense of the time involved for each step of the project.
2. **Staying Focused:** Once an outline and checklist have been created, students can continually refer back to the outline to make sure they remain focused on getting the job done. Breaking down a project into individual pieces helps keep students focused and engaged on completing the tasks that must be done to complete the assignment.
3. **Completing the task:** By following the checklist, asking questions and keeping on a timeline, students learn important skills that will be needed when they graduate.

Plan BACKWARDS to move forward

1

VISUALIZE what the finished project will look like

2

Figure out the **PLAN** of what needs to happen to materialize the goal

3

Ensure all the materials are present to support the task

4


Plan for how long each step will take and sequence accordingly

5

Actually get the materials and **BEGIN!**

90% of the time, task planning happens in a different space from where you execute the plan © Sarah Ward

(e.g., deciding what materials are needed for homework that evening to complete the assignment or study for the test)



What home activities can improve organizational skills?



To Do lists (learning to prioritize items on the list)



Model planning skills (self-talk out loud)



Sequence homework or chore activities together (consider the steps **WITHIN** a task to break it down)



Assign chores that involve sorting or categorization



Cook together



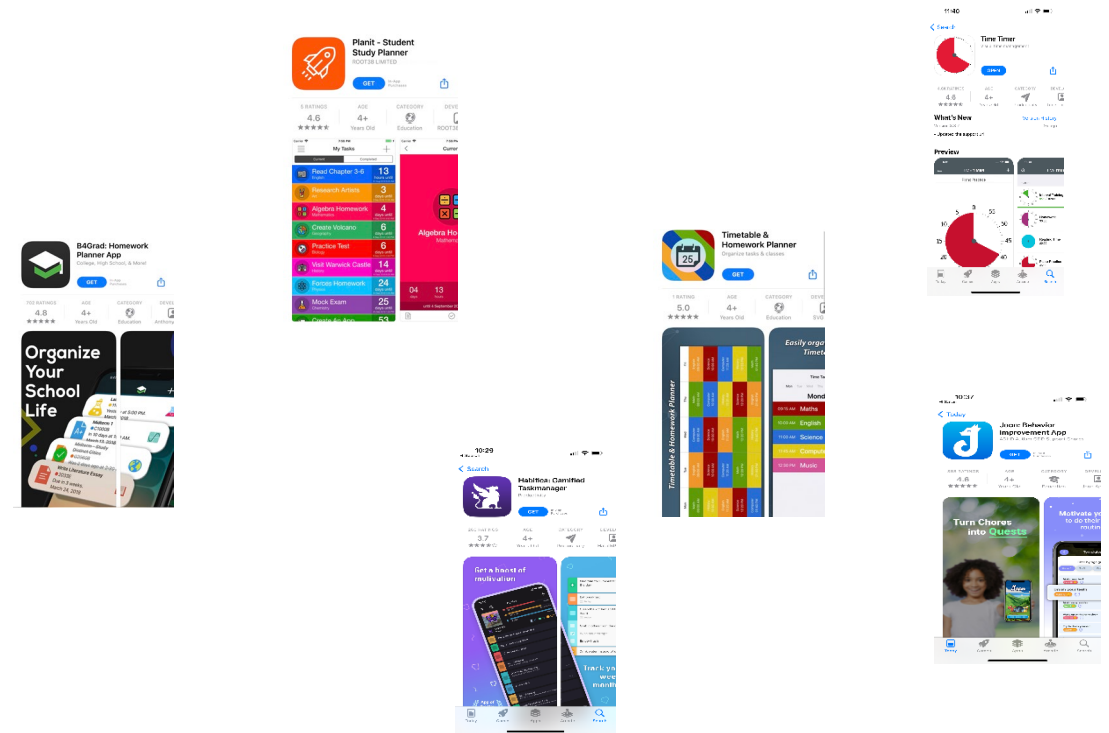
Use CLEAR containers and closet organizers. Help your child to physically organize their room/workspace.



Gently highlight challenges

How can technology support organization and study skills?

- **Google Classroom** – access regularly to keep on top of upcoming assignments / exams
- **Sticky notes or Google Keep (free with a google account)** - exactly like a physical yellow post-it but electronic.
- **Sync calendars and devices**
- **Alarms, phone reminders or PC alerts**
- **'To Do' lists/ Agenda**
- **Count down Apps:** examples include **Beeper App, Time Timer**
- **Student Planner Apps-** **PlanIt-Student Study Planner** or **Timetable & Homework Planner**
- **Task Management Apps:** examples include **Habitica, Joon, and B4Grad: Homework Planner**
- **Strict Workflow** – extension through Google chrome which can block distracting websites for 25 minutes at a time.





Using planners properly can help students to complete homework and achieve better grades

Apps can help students remember **WHEN** to do something but writing or mapping these tasks can help students figure out **HOW** do things.



Agenda Tips:

- Write down homework assignments with **specific** details including page numbers, questions to answer, format guidelines etc.
- Write down any supplies you will need including textbooks, notes, worksheets, binders etc.
- Write **NO HOMEWORK** or **NHW** rather than leaving blank pages
- Explore using abbreviations such as **WS for worksheet, T for test, PG for page**
- Write due date beside the assignment (**if several days to the due date...continue to write it down until assignment or homework is completed**).
- Check or cross off assignments as completed.
- Write other reminders in your agenda including days to bring gym clothes, practices etc.

Physical Organizational Skills

Try

- Try color coding subjects (notebooks/binders to particular subjects)

Put

- Always put papers in the proper place immediately to reduce the risk of them becoming lost/wrinkled or torn.

Replace

- Replace binders, folders and books as they become damaged.

Keep

- Keep decorating to a minimum. Visual clutter can lead to physical clutter.

Schedule

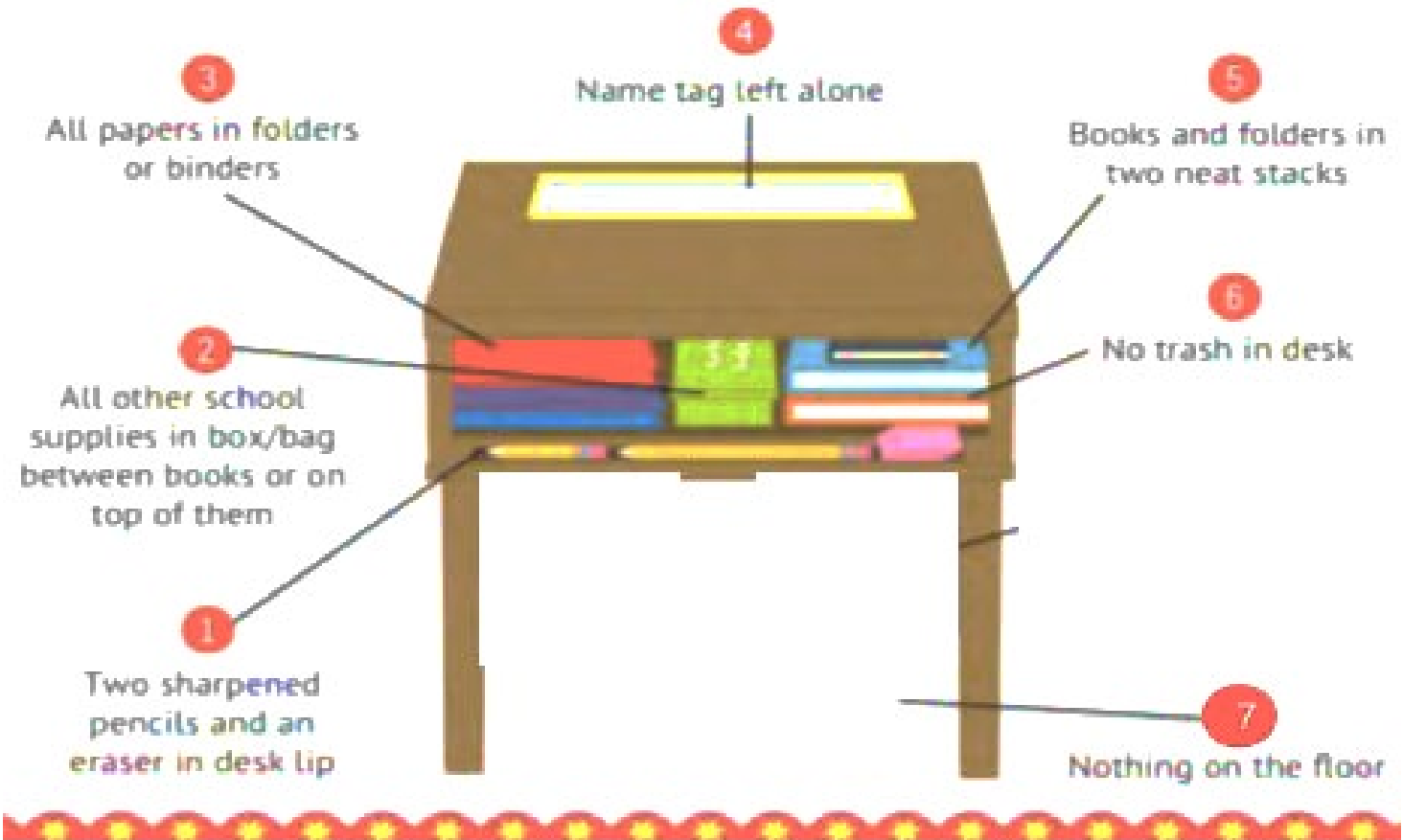
- Schedule periodic clean outs. Helps to reduce clutter and locate missing items.

Store

- Store pencils and the like in a clear pencil case so that items can be easily found.

Physical
Organizational
Skills...

What does a clean desk look like?



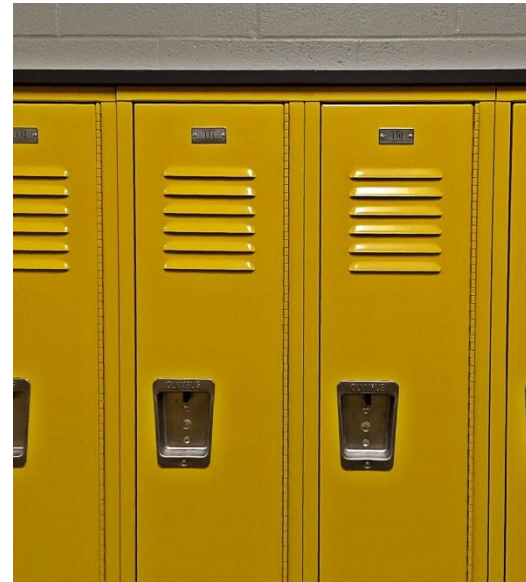
Physical Organizational Skills...

Consider items to help organize materials in the locker:

- Magnetic Caddy – keep pens, highlighter, and other tools easily accessible with a magnetic caddy.
- Have Ziploc bags or pencil cases within each of the binders to ensure necessary materials are kept within the appropriate binder opposed to loose within the locker.
- Consider color coding a posted schedule with the corresponding binder color for an easy visual reference.
- A dry erase board is great for writing small notes or reminders.

Do a Friday Refresh – take a couple minutes each week to give the locker a quick tidy. A few minutes of attention on Friday will enable a fresh start on Monday.

Can take a photo of the “organized locker” to have as a visual reminder of where everything SHOULD go.





What is Time Management?

Time Management are **THINKING** skills that help:

- Complete assignments, jobs and chores on time
- Plan the day
- Plan out what **NEEDS** to be done
- Plan out what **WANTS** to be done
- Make a smart guess about how long it will take to do something

Time Management is important for:

- Ensuring homework is turned in on time
- Ensuring other daily tasks/chores are completed
- Reducing 'wasted' time when doing homework or chores so there is more 'free' time

Many students **underestimate** how long it will take to complete an assignment OFTEN because they are not organized.

Estimating the time it will take to complete a task can help students learn to stay on task and become more efficient.



Time Management in Everyday Situations:

- Without going overboard, maintain a predictable schedule/daily routine in your
- Talk about how long it will take to do things such as chores or cleaning their room – develop time estimation skills early on (critical component of time management)
- Encourage your child to plan an activity for a weekend that involves several steps (i.e., spending the day with a friend – lunch, skating, stopping for ice cream etc.) and figure out how much time everything takes.
- Model using calendars/schedules to encourage your child to do the same (use a visual scheduler with 15-minute increments to help with planning and to visualize what a day will look like)
- Purchase a commercially available clock (i.e., Time Timers) that shows visually how long is left to work.



Consider use of a wall clock to help with “estimating” time for task completion:

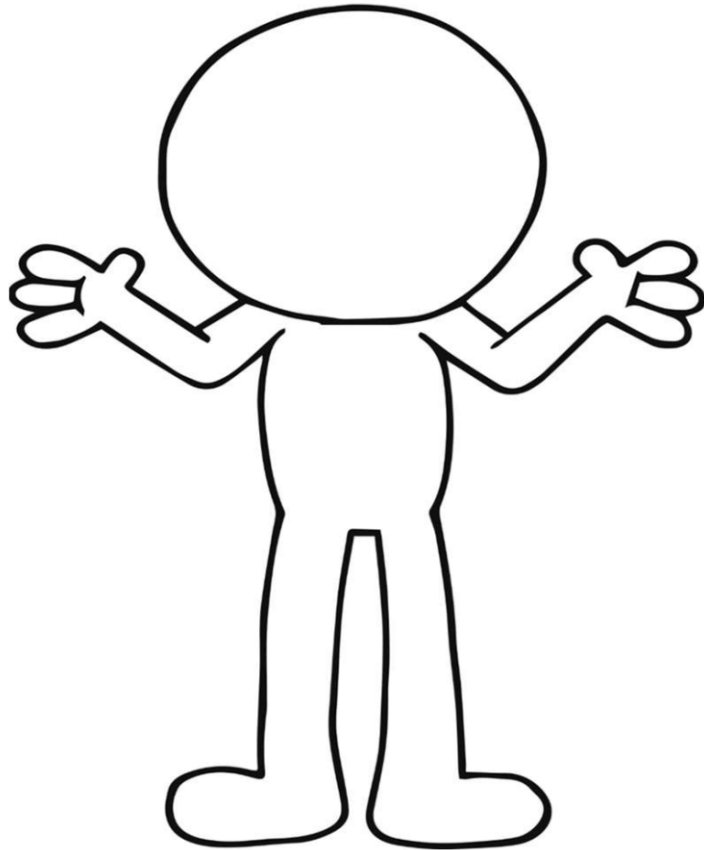


My Internal and External Time Robbers

Identify

Remove

Replan



Time Robbers	Cause/s	Time Savers

“Human beings are happier, more cooperative and productive, and more likely to make positive changes in their behavior when those in positions of authority do things with them rather than to them or for them.”

Ted Wachtel, International Institute for
Restorative Practices

Writing/ Reviewing Notes:

Notes can increase your recall of important information and can be used to call out important topics or ideas that you need to revisit.

- **Create your own bullet system** using different numbering or symbols to mark up your notes.
 - For example, use a star for points to come back to, an exclamation mark for points you plan to put on flashcards, or a smiley face or question mark for concepts to ask about or are unclear.
 - Shorten notes by using abbreviations and symbols.
 - Use HEADINGS for main ideas and concepts (or different colored highlighter)
 - Underline KEY words
- **Explore getting creative**
 - Draw pictures, thought bubbles, or anything that pulls your attention to important topics.
 - Draw arrows from the cause to the effect.
 - Mind mapping is a great technique to help visually organize information you need to study.
- **Auditory Recording** - Record yourself reading notes and listen to them over again. Some students do better with auditory processing to solidify knowledge vs. reading.



Study Skills for Older Students:

- **Focused Attention Times** - Be aware of critical times for focused attention – avoid studying right before bed.
- **Self-monitor** while working (set a timer periodically to 'check-in' to see if on-task and paying attention)
 - If off task, what was distracting? Steps to refocus
 - If struggling with content, look back to notes for clarification.
- **Spaced Repetition**
 - Break up study sessions into shorter, more frequent sessions over a few days or weeks leading up to an exam.
 - Spacing out learning over a period of time can help reinforce understanding of the material and improve your retention.
- **Visual Aids**
 - Using diagrams, mind maps, and graphs can help you better understand and remember complex information. These visual aids can help you organize information in a way that makes sense to you and identify key connections between different pieces of information.
- **Teaching Others** –
 - If you can find someone willing to listen and learn, teaching others what you know can be an effective way to give your studies a boost. By explaining concepts to others, you'll be able to identify areas where you need to focus your attention and reinforce your own understanding of the material.

Study Skills for Older Students continued... (Making Flashcards):



Active Recall

- Turn notes into flashcards.
- Make flashcards from 3x5 cards or search for one of the many free apps online (Brainscape, GoConqr, Flashcard Generator) for making digital flashcards.

The most effective flashcards include one question followed by one answer (or term followed by one definition). Keep it concise!

- Boost memory by combining pictures with words (Pictorial Superiority Effect (PSE) – John Medina) – could be stick figures, a map, flowchart (quick simple sketches)
- **Try Color Coding:**
 - Use colors to categorize information.
 - Different colors can represent different topics or themes.
- After answering a flashcard, sort into 3 piles (1- No clue about this, 2- I really know this or 3- I have questions about this). Focus on learning the information for the 1st pile in preparation for a test.

Study Skills for Older Students continued... (Reading and Test – Taking Techniques):

Active Reading:

- Preview the material before reading to get an overview.
- Take notes while reading to enhance understanding.
- Highlight key points and make comments beside to improve understanding of material.

Effective Reading Techniques:

- Practice skimming and scanning for quick comprehension.
- Summarize paragraphs or sections in your own words.
- Ask questions while reading to stay engaged.

Test-Taking Strategies:

- Practice past exams or sample questions. Practice under exam-like conditions by timing yourself and minimizing distractions
- Review and understand the format of the test.
- Manage time during the exam effectively.



Study Skills for Older Students continued...

(Use of Mnemonics):

- Create mnemonic devices to remember lists, sequences, or complex information.
- Acronyms and rhymes are common mnemonic techniques.

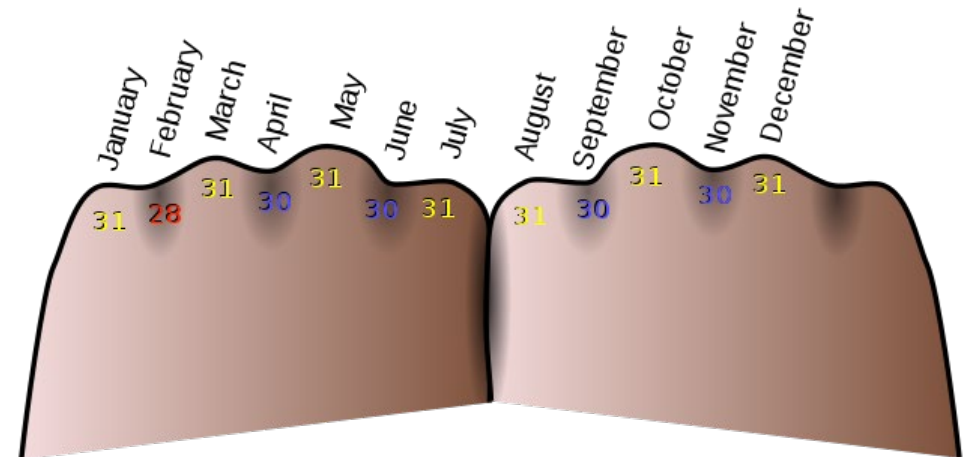
Examples:

1. Order of Planets:

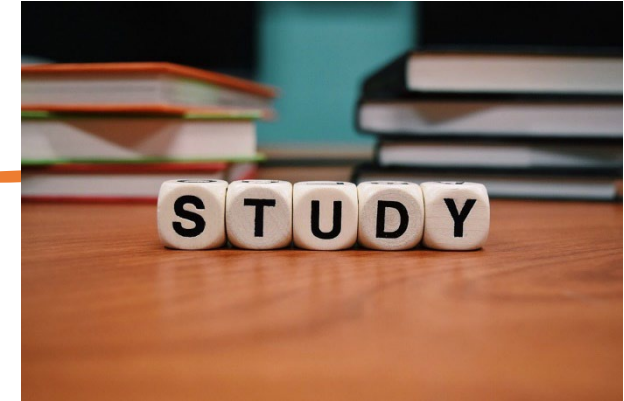
- My Very Educated Mother Just Served Us Noodles
- (Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune)

2. Musical Notes on Lines of the Treble Clef:

- Every Good Boy Deserves Fudge
- (E, G, B, D, F)



Possible Study Techniques:



The Pomodoro technique (developed by Francesco Cirillo in the late 1980s)

The original technique has six steps:

- 1) Decide on the task to be done.
- 2) Set the Pomodoro timer – kitchen timer (typically for 25 minutes)
- 3) Work on the task.
- 4) End work when the timer rings and take a short break (typically 5–10 minutes)
- 5) Go back to Step 2 and repeat until you complete four pomodoros.
- 6) After four pomodoros are done, take a long break (typically 20 to 30 minutes) instead of a short break. Once the long break is finished, return to step 2 until task completion.

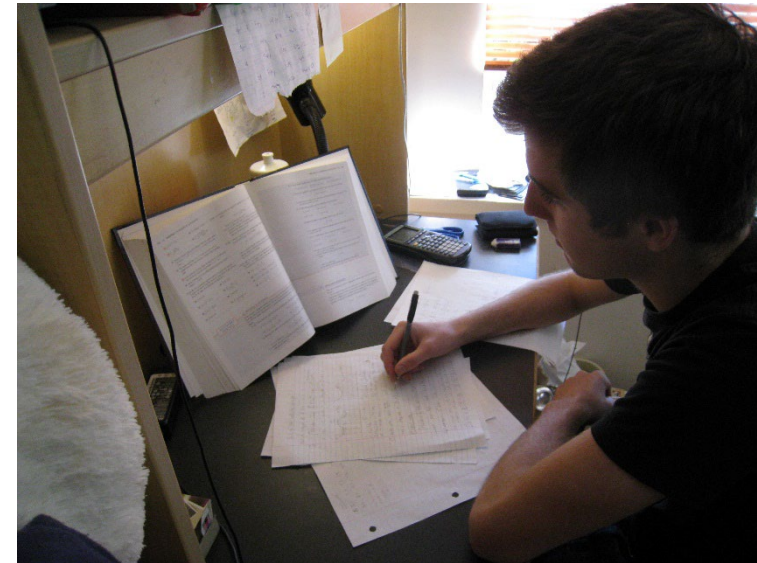
Flowtime technique (Invented by Zoe Read-Bivens in 2016)

The Flowtime technique is essentially a twist on the Pomodoro Technique. While the latter works in strict time intervals, the Flowtime technique is more customizable and helps maximize your focus periods. In Flowtime, you craft a detailed list, acting as your productivity roadmap. This list not only tracks your work sessions but also notes down any distractions and those essential break times. The Flowtime Technique encourages you to work for as long as your flow state lasts.

Possible Study Techniques:

Eat the Frog technique (developed by Brian Tracy)

1. Define your goals and write them down.
2. Break those goals down into tasks.
3. Break those tasks down into the smallest possible subtasks.
4. Prioritize your tasks and delete tasks you don't need to do.
5. Schedule time on your calendar every single day, ideally first thing, to work on your highest-priority goal task.
6. Focus on your goal task (your frog) during your scheduled time, and work on it until it's complete. (This is the actual eating of the frog.)



GTD (Getting Things Done) Method

The crux of the GTD system is to store every task, reminder, and note bouncing around your brain in an external organization system to free up your mental energy to actually focus on the task at hand.

The Getting Things Done system has five steps:

1. Capture all the problems and ideas that are taking your attention.

2. Clarify what each one means and what you need to do about it.

3. Organize the decisions and actions you've clarified.

4. Reflect on everything in front of you to choose what to tackle next.

5. Engage with the task (get it done).

Setting up a Work Station:

- Reduce distractions and disruptions (physical and technology).
- Find a solid, flat desk or table to work at. It should be clean and uncluttered.
- Sit in a comfortable, straight back chair. Good posture promotes increased blood flow to the brain.
- Work in a well-lit space. Spaces that are too dark tend to create mental fatigue and eyestrain.
- Work in a quiet space or one with low level of background noise. Brown noise can be helpful or noise reducing headphones.
- Avoid having television on or phones close by as this will increase the likelihood of becoming distracted.



Questions



References:

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Potentially Helpful Websites:

<http://smartbutscatteredkids.com>

<http://www.efintheclassroom.net>

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B4kld0327lZdNk44eDdCS24yckE>
(Bedford ES materials)

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCvePPJz4o_6Dg5qTzOqcVPg
(YouTube Channel: Teenchangers)

<http://efs2therescue.ca>

<http://activatedlearning.org>

<http://learningworksforkids.com>

<http://www.toolsofthemind.org>

<http://www.unstuckontarget.com>

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/teenbrain/view/>

<http://developingchild.harvard.edu>

<http://www.brainfacts.org>

<http://www.dana.org>

<https://casel.org/resources>

<https://www.pbisworld.com>

<https://www.gonoodle.com>