Self-discipline

Self-discipline can be considered a type of selective training, creating new habits of thought, action, and speech toward improving yourself and reaching goals. Self-discipline can also be task oriented and selective. View self-discipline as positive effort, rather than one of denial.

Schedule a small task for a given time of the day.

- Schedule a particular task in the morning and once in the evening.
- The task should not take more than 15 minutes.
- Wait for the exact scheduled time. Practice deliberate delaying. When the schedule time is due, start the task.
- Stick to the schedule for at least two months.

**Advantages:** Scheduling helps you focus on your priorities. By focusing on starting tasks rather than completing them, you can avoid procrastination.

- Schedule a task and hold to its time. Avoid acting on impulse.
- Track your progress. At the end of the allotted time, keep a record of accomplishment that builds over time.

**Advantage:** Building a record will help you track how much time tasks take. If you begin to have surplus time, fill it with small tasks, make notes to yourself, plan other tasks, etc.

Harness the power of routine.

- Instead of devoting a lot of hours one day, and none the other and then a few on an another day and so on, allocate a specific time period each day of the week for that task.
- Hold firm.
- Don't set a goal other than time allocation, simply set the habit of routine.
- Apply this technique to your homework or your projects, you will be on your way to getting things done.

**Advantage:** You are working on tasks in small increments, not all at once. You first develop a habit, then the habit does the job for you.

Use self discipline to explore time management.

Time management can become an overwhelming task. When you do not have control over your own self, how can you control time? Begin with task-oriented self-discipline and build from there.

**Advantage:** As you control tasks, you build self-discipline. As you build self-discipline, you build time management. As you build time management, you build self-confidence.

- Record the start and end times of the tasks.
- Review for feedback on your progress.

**Advantage:** This log book can be a valuable tool to get a better picture over your activities in order to prioritize activities, and realize what is important and not important on how you spend your time.

Schedule your work day and studies.

- When you first begin your work day, or going to work take a few minutes and write down on a piece of paper the tasks that you want to accomplish for that day.
- Prioritize the list.
- Immediately start working on the most important one.
- Try it for a few days to see if the habit works for you.
- Habits form over time: how much time depends on you and the habit.

**Advantage:** When you have a clear idea as to what you want to achieve for the day at its start, the chances are very high that you will be able to proactively accomplish the tasks. Writing or sketching out the day helps.

Discouragement:

- Do not be intimidated; do not be put off by the challenge
- If you slip, remember this is natural
- Take a break and then refresh the challenge

Tricks:

**Associate a new habit with an old one:**
If you drink coffee, make that first cup the time to write out and prioritize your tasks.

**Advantage:** Association facilitates neural connections!

**Tick your progress:**
On a calendar in your bathroom, on a spreadsheet at your computer:
Check off days you successfully follow up. If you break the routine, start over!

**Advantage:** Visualizing is a ready reinforcement of progress

Role models:

Observe the people in your life and see how self discipline and habits help them reach goals.
Ask them for advice on what works, what does not.

Contributed by Mahanthi Bukkapaptnam, Des Moines, Iowa