

Managing Your Time

Everyone has the same 168 hours available each week, but some people seem to accomplish a lot more in that time than others! How do you handle your time? Do you manage it, or do outside factors control it? Are you a planner or a procrastinator? Do you allocate time blocs for your priorities, or do you “go with the flow” as things come up, and then push to meet the barrage of deadlines that seem to hit you in waves?

Those who manage their time well generally enjoy greater success (academically and professionally), a more balanced life, and a less stressful or healthier physical condition, making them less susceptible to burnout and illness or injury. One of the best opportunities you’ll have to become a competent manager of time and priorities is in college, when you have greater self-determination alongside more varied and significant responsibilities. Whether you’re looking for a couple of tips to improve on a fairly effective system, or need to start from scratch, these guidelines can help.

The first step in time management is to identify everything you need to manage, both your obligations (school, work, family) and the things you need or would like to do for yourself (social life, exercise, etc.). The best way to do this is to map it out on a calendar. The guidelines that follow are programmed around use of the **FREE** Google calendars account, available using the link below. This account will let you create a weekly schedule accessible from anywhere you can get online. You can even sync it to your cell phone!

GET STARTED NOW!

Follow the instructions on the link provided, first to set up your account, and then to set up your time management plan.

www.google.com/calendar

Create a monthly, weekly, and daily plan that works for you!

Why a monthly calendar?

A monthly calendar allows you to see upcoming events at a glance, which weekly calendars can't do. You need to know of upcoming tests, papers, or special events in time to be ready for them, especially when several due dates coincide or come in quick succession. Getting it all on one page will help you know how many obligations you need to take care of in a short window of time, and it will allow you plan how you'll be prepared for these events and due dates.

How to create your monthly calendar:

When you open up your Google calendar account, select the "Month" tab or click on the smaller month calendar to the left.

- 1) Using each of your syllabi, enter all tests, papers, projects, or other due dates in any class, or other school responsibilities like monthly or weekly meetings.
- 2) Then include any personal obligations you may have such as holidays or birthdays that you need to remember.

Do this by clicking on the date and entering the event name. Once you have all this, you're ready to plan out your preparation. Work backwards from the due dates to identify preparatory steps and to ensure you're ready for the deadline.

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the Google Calendar interface. The browser's address bar shows the URL: http://www.google.com/calendar/render?gsessionid=OHEWpxa694o3P_CNIyKZVA. The calendar is set to July 2009 and is in the 'Month' view. The main calendar grid shows events for each day of the month. On the left side, there is a smaller calendar for the current month and year, with a 'Create Event' button above it. The bottom of the browser window shows the Windows taskbar with the 'start' button and several open applications, including 'Inbox for jbarber@...', 'Google Calendar - M...', 'electronic resources ...', and 'Managing Your Time...'. The system clock in the bottom right corner shows '4:41 PM'.

Why a weekly calendar?

Weekly schedules serve two purposes:

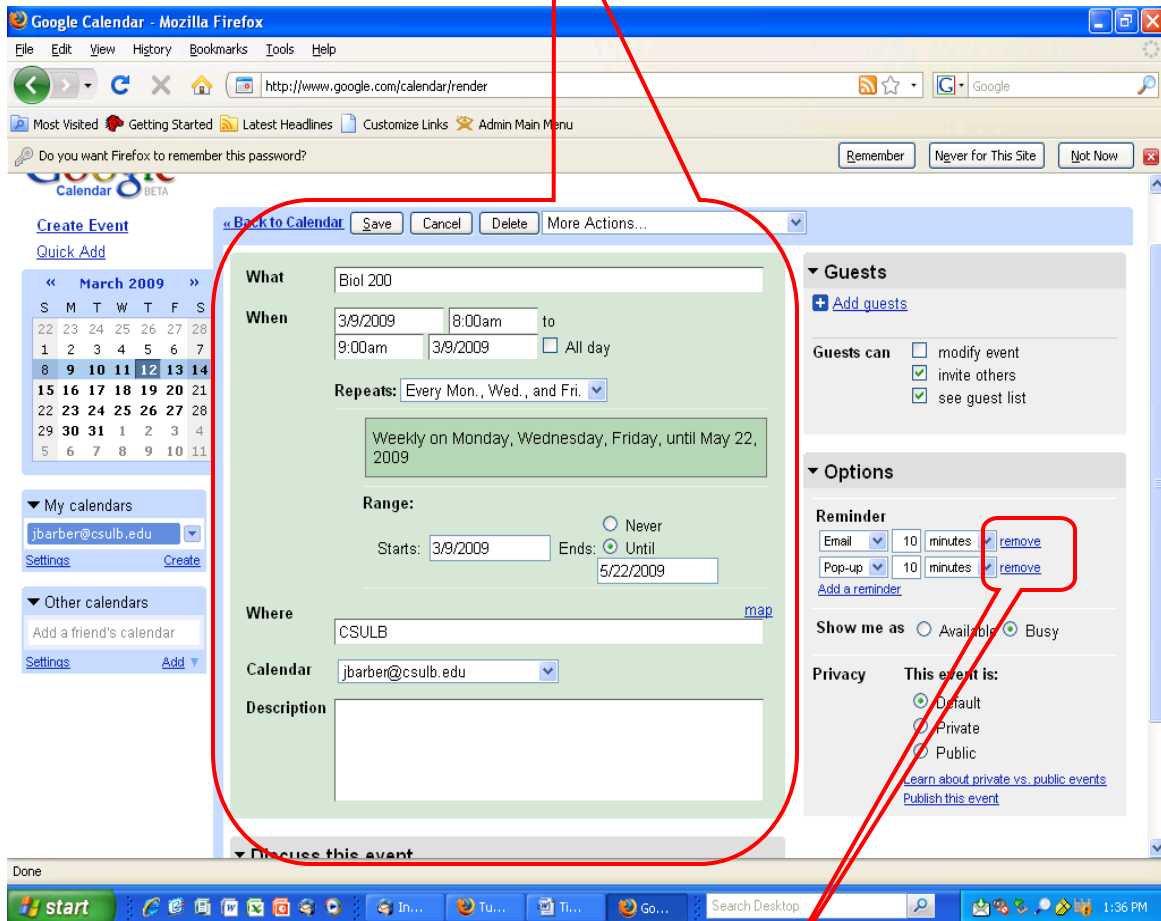
- 1) They establish a regular routine that lets you keep up in all classes, a key to learning new information more quickly and better.
- 2) They allow you to plan specifically for occasional obligations that fall in a given week.

The first step in creating your weekly planner is to input all classes, work hours and personal obligations that are consistent all semester long.

Enter events into Google calendar by clicking on the hour you would like to schedule. A box with the date and the word 'What' will pop up like the one below.

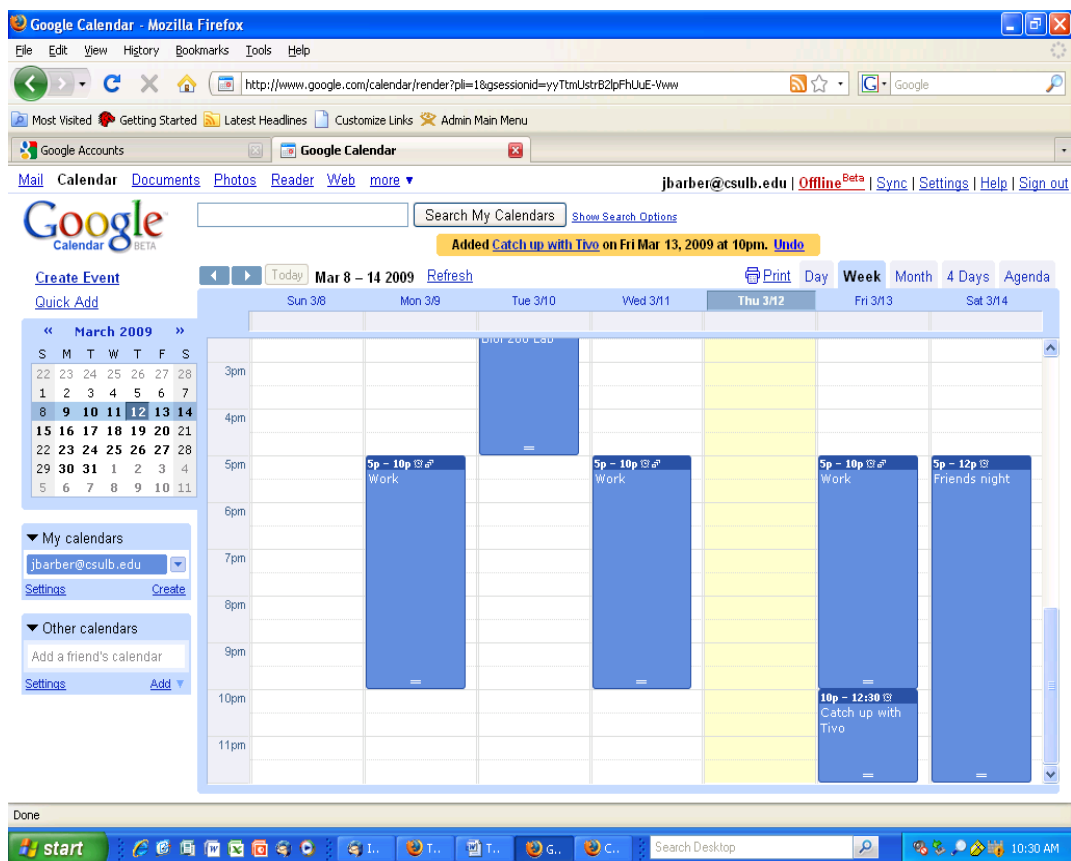
The screenshot shows the Google Calendar interface in a Mozilla Firefox browser window. The calendar is set to a weekly view for the week of April 19-25, 2009. A red box highlights a 'What:' pop-up window that appears when clicking on a 12p-1p slot on Sunday, April 19. The pop-up window contains the text 'Sun, April 19, 12pm - 1pm' and a 'What:' label followed by a text input field. Below the input field, there is a placeholder text 'e.g., Breakfast at Tiffany's' and two buttons: 'Create Event' and 'edit event details'. The calendar itself shows several events: '1p - 2:30p Comm 130' on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday; '2p - 5p Biol 200 Lab' on Tuesday; '5p - 10p Work' on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday; and '9 - 10 English 100' and '9 - 10 Hist 172' on Wednesday and Thursday. The browser's address bar shows 'http://www.google.com/calendar/render' and the user is logged in as 'jbarber@csulb.edu'.

Next, click on 'edit event details' and plug in your class schedule, identifying each class specifically. In this window you can set the event time (starting and ending), identify it as repeating during the week and indicate the last date of the course (example below).



The system will automatically send a reminder to your e-mail account each time the event occurs. If you **do not** want a reminder for every class, then click on 'Remove' under 'Options' on the right side of the page. If you **do** want to set up a reminder, then choose how far in advance you would like to be reminded and whether you prefer that reminder to be an e-mail or pop-up (you must be logged onto Google calendar in order to receive a pop-up reminder). Remember to save each event before you log out.

Follow the above steps entering your class, work and personal schedule. Be sure to enter all obligations you have on a weekly basis, including your work schedule (if it is not regular, estimate the hours) and any extra-curricular activities (meetings, volunteer work, internship, etc.) or personal time (family time, commute time, social routines, exercise, etc.) that happen on a regular basis every week. When you are finished, your schedule should look like the one below.



Now that you have your weekly “routine” scheduled, you can start to plug in your study sessions, ensuring that they will not be in conflict with other priorities. The best way to stay on top of material for every class is to use the PLRS system.

PLRS

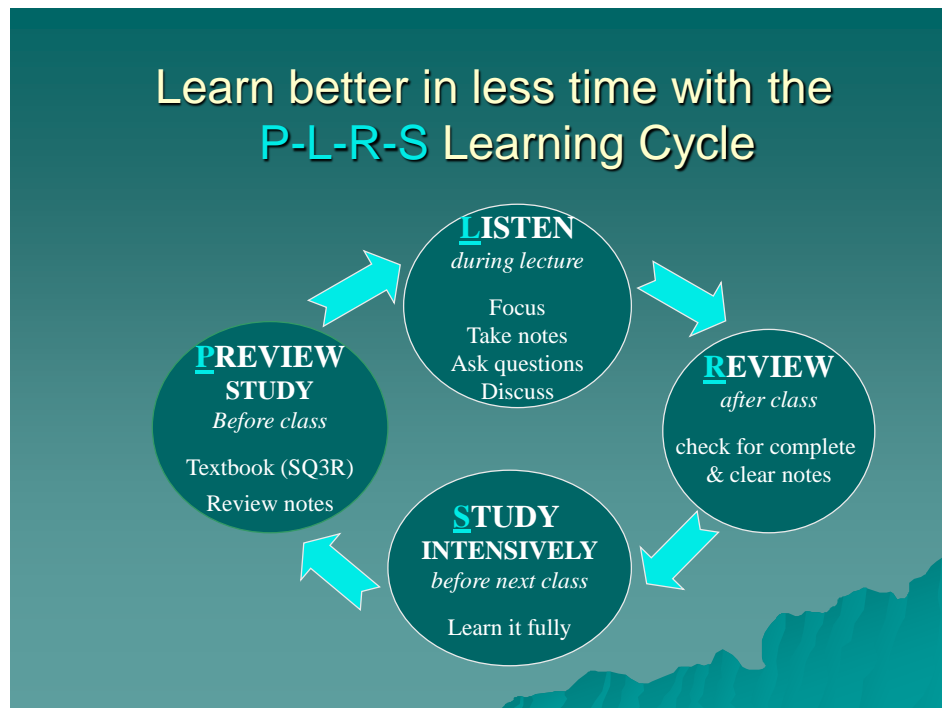
The most effective and time-efficient way to learn is to use the PLRS system. PLRS is based on several known learning principles:

First, because your brain stores new knowledge by connecting it to information already learned, PLRS has you learn what has already been covered in class before you are given new content to add to that.

Secondly, it recognizes that what you've already given some thought to will stay with you better when it's presented to you, so this system sends you to class better prepared to learn and remember what the professor teaches.

Third, studies have shown that the more you see, hear and work with new information, the more likely you are to understand and remember it AND build upon it. By having you consider the same material in several different ways within a short period of time, this system increases your long-term retention of new material, eliminating the need to "cram" before a test because you already know the information. Study sessions become time to polish concepts and think deeper about them—so you can apply, connect, and evaluate test items as needed, thinking clearly and confidently to earn a higher grade!

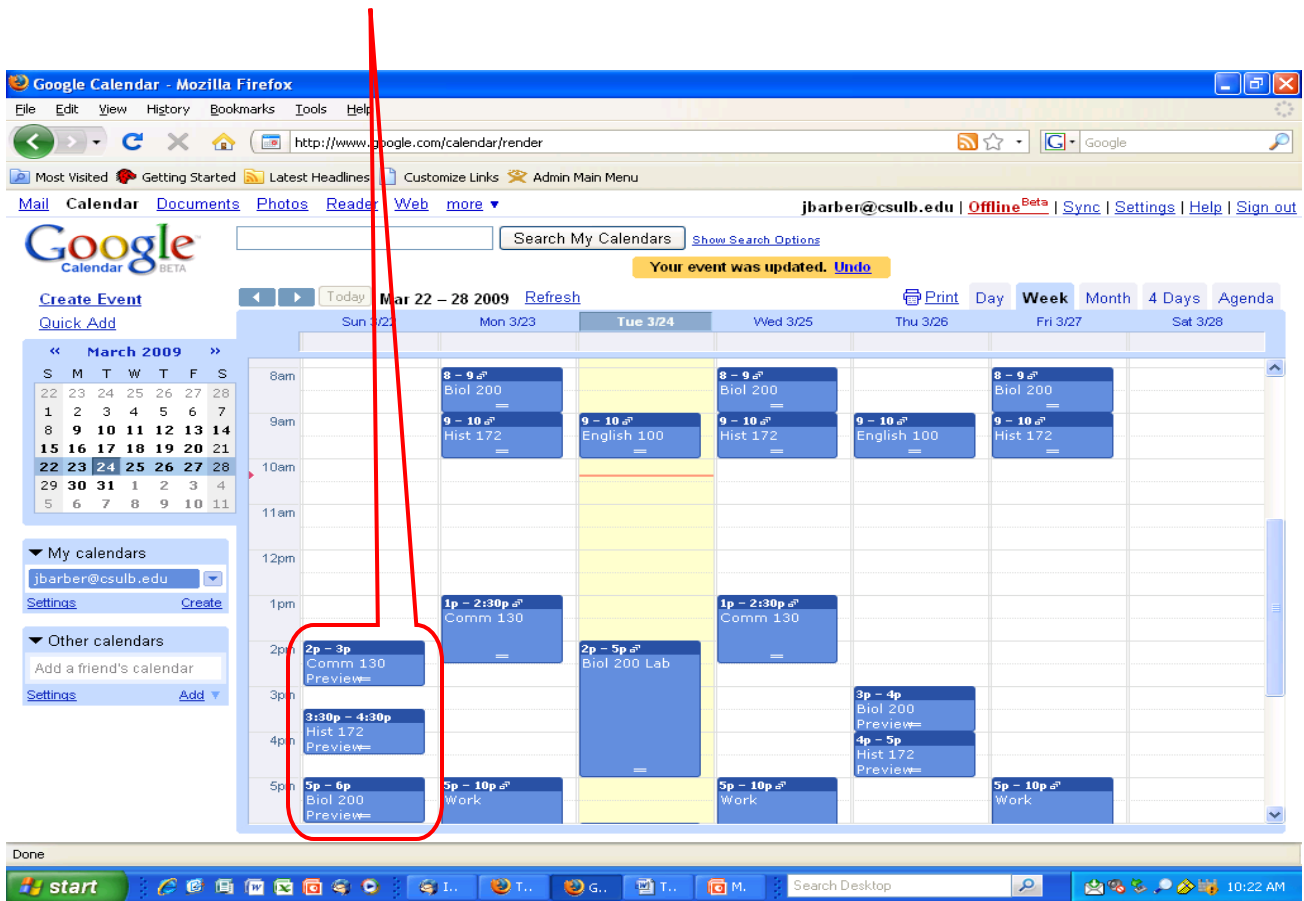
The best part of PLRS is that it doesn't require more time—if done correctly, it actually reduces your study time while increasing your understanding and retention!



Preview

Designate a preview session before every class meeting, when you will review your notes from last class, take a look at the syllabus to see what will be covered for the next class session, and overview the assigned readings, think critically about the topics that will be covered and try get a basic understanding of the upcoming lecture material. The preview is equivalent to stretching before you exercise or run; it allows your brain to “warm up” so that you can gain more from lecture. How much time you set aside may depend on what each class is like (a literature class may require longer preview time and less learning time, whereas math classes are the reverse).

As you enter your preview sessions into Google Calendar, keep each one as close as possible to the actual class session. If you plan to preview for 2 classes in one sitting, end with the class you will see first so that the information you preview last will be freshest in your mind for your first class the next day. See the example below for clarification.



Lecture

Go to class and be sure to take notes! Think about what you're hearing or seeing, and ask questions when you need to.

Review

Designate a review session as soon as possible after each class meeting. Look carefully at your notes, making sure that they will be understandable in one or two weeks! You may want to rewrite your notes and/or organize concepts into items you understand well and items that you need to focus on during a study session later. If you plan to review for more than one class at a time, you should review the class you most recently got out of first; this is because that information is likely to be the freshest in your mind. See the example below for clarification.

The screenshot shows a Mozilla Firefox browser window displaying the Google Calendar interface. The address bar shows the URL <http://www.google.com/calendar/render>. The page title is "Google Calendar - Mozilla Firefox". The browser's menu bar includes File, Edit, View, History, Bookmarks, Tools, and Help. The toolbar contains navigation buttons (back, forward, home, search) and a search bar. The main content area shows the Google Calendar interface for the week of May 10-16, 2009. The calendar is in "Week" view. A red box highlights a "10:30 - Review Biol" event on Monday, May 11, 2009. A red arrow points from the text above to this event. The interface includes a navigation bar, a calendar grid, and a task list on the right. The task list on the right includes "July 3 Friday" (Mail rent check), "July 6 Monday" (Pay car insurance), and "No due date" (Edit paper for English 100, Call for work schedule). The Windows taskbar at the bottom shows the Start button, several application icons, and the system tray with the time 10:17 AM.

Study

Identify periods of time each week when you will learn all the material presented in class (lecture and/or assigned readings) and master the skill or process taught in class (homework problems etc.). Know it well enough that you would do well on a pop quiz at the next class meeting.

Google Calendar - Mozilla Firefox

File Edit View History Bookmarks Tools Help

http://www.google.com/calendar/render

Most Visited Getting Started Latest Headlines Customize Links Admin Main Menu

Do you want Firefox to remember this password? Remember Never for This Site Not Now

Mail Calendar Documents Photos Reader Sites Web more

jbarber@csulb.edu | Online | New: Labs features | Sync | Settings | Help | Sign out

Google calendar Search My Calendars Show Search Options

Create Event Quick Add Tasks

Today May 10 - 16 2009 Refresh Print Day Week Month 4 Days Agenda

« March 2009 »

S M T W T F S

22 23 24 25 26 27 28

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

8 9 10 11 12 13 14

15 16 17 18 19 20 21

22 23 24 25 26 27 28

29 30 31 1 2 3 4

▼ My calendars

jbarber@csulb.edu

Tasks Settings Create

▼ Other calendars

Add a friend's calendar

Settings Add

Control how much information others can see in your calendar. Learn more

Tip >

Tasks

Default List

July 3 Friday

1) Mail rent check (due Friday)

July 6 Monday

Pay car insurance

No due date

Edit paper for English 100

1) Call for work schedule

Actions + -

Done

start

Inbox for jbarber@... timemanagement.d... Google Calendar - ... Document1 - Micros... Search Desktop 10:34 AM

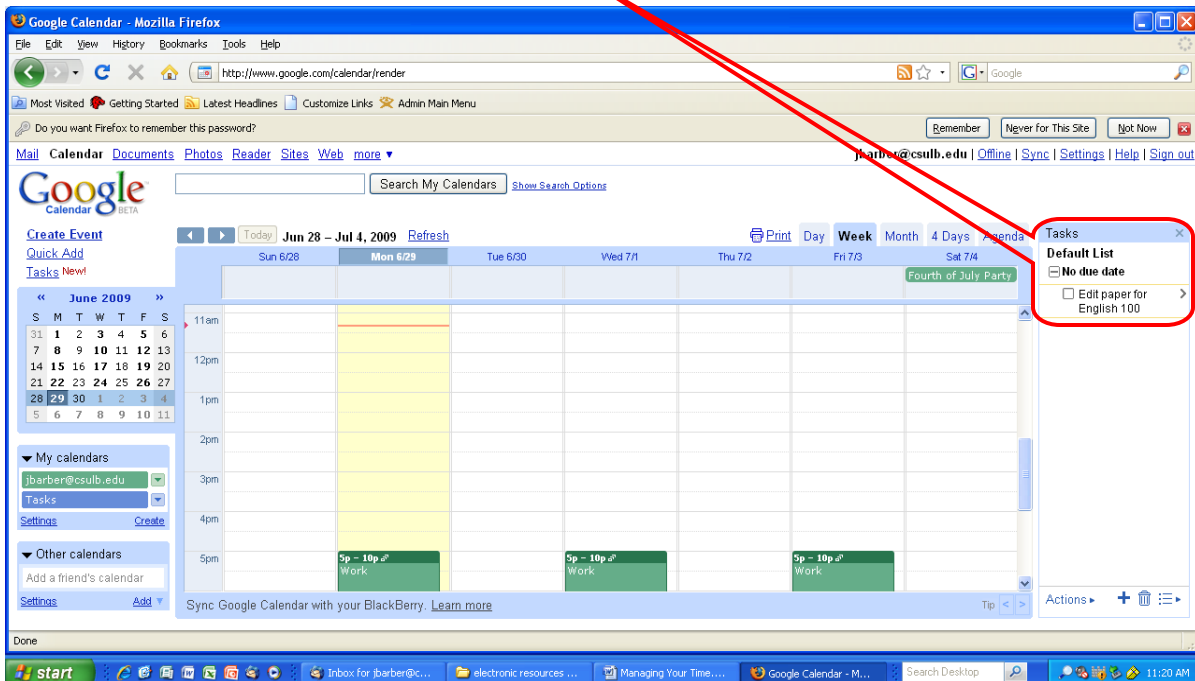
Daily To-Dos

The last step in successful time management is to create a daily to-do list; plan today what you will do tomorrow. The best time to create a to-do list is at the end of a day for the following day, when you're still more conscious of these items. To-do lists allow you to see what you have to accomplish the next day. This is where very specific assignments (read chapter 4, draft history essay, etc.) are identified so you remember to do them and so you make good use of any unexpected free time in your day. You should include both academic and personal obligations you may have to take care of. Below is an example of a to-do list:

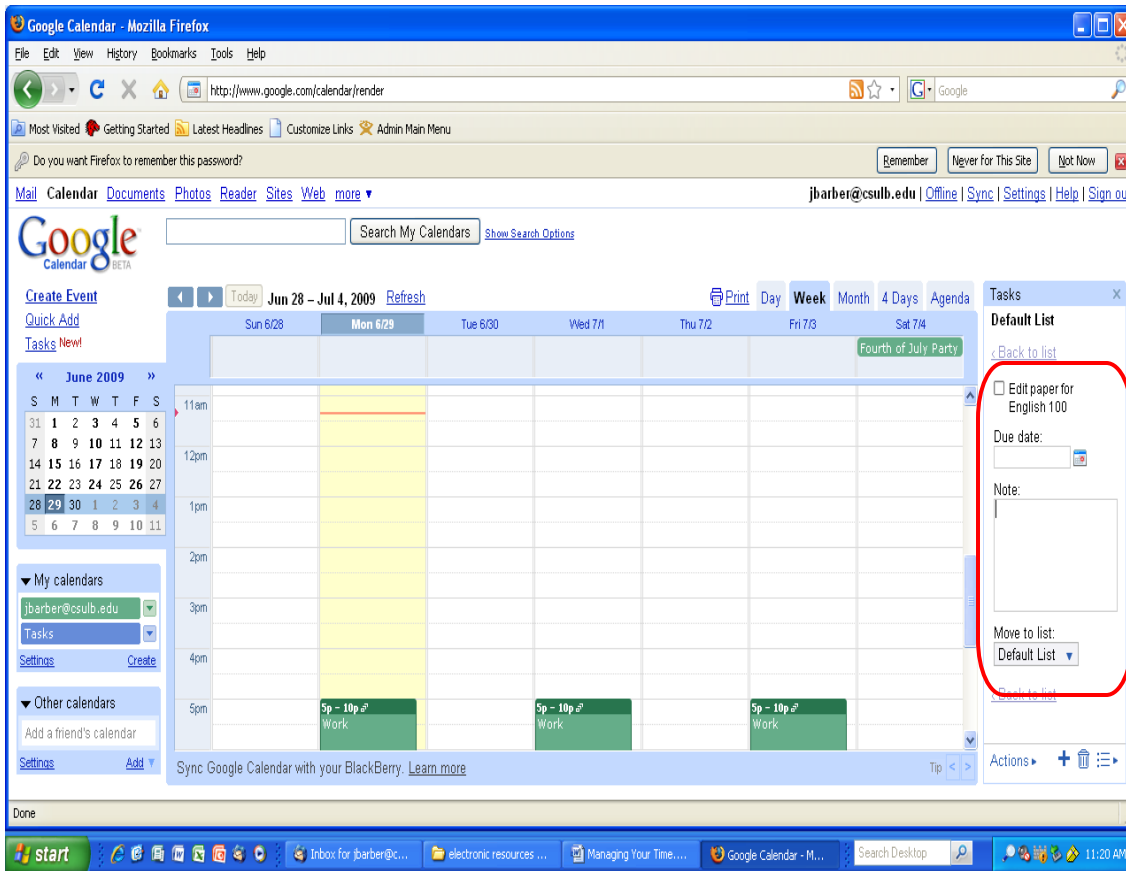
- 1) Edit paper for English 100 (due tomorrow)
- 2) Mail rent check (due Friday)
- 3) Call for work schedule
- 4) Pay car insurance (due next Monday)
- 5) Begin review for Econ exam (due next Wednesday)

If you'd like to carry a paper list you might find it helpful to keep a pad of paper by your bed to jot down items before sleeping and check when you get up. Or if it's more convenient to check your phone, use the notepad feature. But if you can access your Google Calendar throughout the day, you can take advantage of the new task list feature:

- 1) Open Google Calendars and click on 'Tasks' located in the upper left corner of the screen.
- 2) Once open, a 'Tasks' bar will appear on the right side of the screen. Under the title 'Tasks' you will see the words "No due date." This will change as you click the box to the left, which shows a + or a - when you click on it. To create your list make sure the sign in the box shows -, then simply click below the title '- No Due Date'. Once you click, you will see your cursor next to an empty box. Write out your 'to-do' item here as seen below.



When finished you can set a specific due date for the item by clicking on the arrow to the right and entering the date information. You may not need to indicate specific due dates if all tasks are to be completed on the same day. If you indicate a due date, the item will appear in the list and on the calendar for that date.



Once finished, the list will remain on the right side of the screen. Items are automatically saved once entered. If you do not want the list visible, click the X in the upper right corner of the box. Click the box to the left of the 'to-do' to cross out an items you've completed (see example above).

Overall, creating a list allows you to see what you have to do for the day, and prioritize tasks based on importance. "To-dos" are also great for motivation because you are able to see all that you can accomplish in one day by crossing off items you complete!

Procrastination

Do you have the intentions to study, but never quite get to it? Do chores, friends, Facebook, re-runs of Lost or your pets keep you from starting that paper due tonight in class? Do you claim, "I work best on a deadline"? If any of these statements are true then you are a procrastinator! Procrastination is a problem we all deal with. Studies have shown that a majority of people procrastinate in their daily lives whether it is doing laundry, calling our parents, filing taxes, or completing assignments. Procrastination becomes a problem when it prevents us from achieving our set goals. If you feel that you need some guidance in dealing with procrastination issues, contact us using the information below. Remember: You are not alone!

Need Personal Help?

If you want more help with managing your time, or if you need help developing other study skills such as memory and exam techniques, reading strategies, note taking strategies and much more, make an appointment to visit a Learning Skills Specialist

today by

calling (562) 985-5350

or coming into the Learning Assistance Center located in the
Horn Center room 104.