



Time Management for Dyslexic Children and their parents

A learning disability, such as dyslexia, is just that—a disability, not an impossibility. Staying with a task until it is done can be very hard for anyone who has trouble concentrating or reading. Knowing how to make the best use of your time can help you get more done and feel better about yourself.

Energy Graph

Your Energy Level

Very High																																					
High																																					
Medium																																					
Low																																					
Sleep																																					
	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4													
	MORNING							AFTERNOON							EVENING							NIGHT															

KNOW YOUR PRIME TIME

Prime time is that time during the day when you are most likely to be alert, enthusiastic and creative. Find out when it is for you and use that time of day for your hardest jobs. Chart your energy level for a typical day on the graph above. The numbers along the bottom of the chart stand for the 24 hours in a day (2 = 2:00). Throughout the day, rate your energy level. Place a dot in the box that best describes your level of energy for that hour. Fill in one dot for each hour. Then draw a line to connect the dots. You can

then see when you have the most and least amounts of energy.

Each person’s energy level is different. Some people are morning people; others are evening people. When you have a choice, plan to use your prime times for important jobs requiring the most attention and effort, saving easier jobs for when you have less energy. Look for ways to make your high-energy times longer. Try to keep from being interrupted. Breaks, exercise, good eating habits, and physical fitness can also help you concentrate.

I DON'T HAVE ENOUGH TIME!

We sometimes complain that we just don't have enough time to get everything done. But the truth is, we have enough time to do what is important in our lives. You can always make time for the people important to you and for the activities worth doing.

DOUBLE THE AMOUNT OF WORK YOU FINISH

Would you like to learn a trick that will let you get twice as much done in the same time? Using the "To Do List" at the end of this publication, write down the five most important things you have to do tomorrow.

Now decide whether you would be better off doing the task during a high-energy time of the day or a low-energy time.

Next, rank the tasks in order of their importance to you and your family (1 is for the most important; 5 is for the least important task.) This can be anything you are responsible for, including school work or household chores.

Tomorrow morning, as soon as you are ready to get started, look at your "To Do List." Can you share or trade off any of the activities with someone else? We can all find good excuses as to why we do not trade or get help, sometimes because we do not want others to know we have a learning disability or because we are too embarrassed to ask for help. But learning how to work with others to get jobs done is a valuable skill. Check those things on your "To Do List" that you could trade with a fellow student or family member. Those tasks that only you can do are the ones to work on.

Begin working on your number one activity with all your energy and concentration. Do not even think about the others. Work on number one until you complete it, or until you choose to stop. Then check the "Started" or "Completed" column.

Go on with your number two activity in the same way until it is time to quit for the day.

Do not hassle yourself if you don't get everything done on the list. If you could not complete all of them with this method, you probably wrote down too many things. Or maybe you neglected to ask your teacher for special adjustments or allowances to help you get your work done. You worked on the most important ones—and the others will wait until you get to them. Notice and enjoy what you did get done.

You might set up a reward system to further encourage you to finish tasks, especially if you tend to put things off to the last minute. You might decide, "If I finish today items 1 through 4, then I will reward myself by relaxing, playing a sport, or spending time with friends."

Use this system to list your daily tasks, and you will find that you get the important things done—one day at a time.

Remember:

- ◆ Put the most important things at the top of your "To Do List."
- ◆ Allow time for interruptions or jobs you didn't know about when you made your list.
- ◆ Be aware of and use your prime time—that time each day when you

have the most energy and are the most alert, enthusiastic and creative.

- ◆ Be good to yourself—set goals you can really reach.
- ◆ Limit the amount of time you spend on the jobs you hate.
- ◆ Share and trade off jobs with others.
- ◆ Try to combine trips and tasks instead of making several separate trips.
- ◆ Cross out completed tasks. This helps you see what you have really done.
- ◆ Don't carry over unimportant tasks to the next day.
- ◆ Reward yourself.

HANDLING THE BIG JOBS

Here are some suggestions for handling big-sized jobs:

- ◆ Start now; don't wait for the weekend or that school holiday.
- ◆ Break the big job into little tasks and list them. Include some tasks that can be started and finished in one sitting. For example, if the job is to write a paper, your list may include collecting information at the library, making the outline, then writing the paper.

- ◆ Schedule times to do these tasks, and do at least one task now. This may give you that little extra push you need to get started. Also, plan time ahead for those jobs that take more time.
- ◆ List those tasks you can share or trade with someone.
- ◆ Set a limit on how much time you are willing to spend on the task or activity today and still feel good about yourself.
- ◆ If needed, increase the reward for finishing the task. For example, if you finish all your jobs on time, or complete an especially hard one, extend your play time.

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A Personal Note from the author. . .

Dear student,

If you have dyslexia, or a related learning disability, life can sometimes be very difficult, especially at school. I know, because I am also dyslexic. I have the same constant feeling you do about how much time it takes to do everything. And I remember asking myself all through school why I didn't do as well as other students who put in half the time and effort as I did.

I will share with you some tips I've learned on how to get more things done with your time. This is called "time management." The only problem is that it has taken me 25 years to learn these time management tips! I want you to know that these are not all my tips; many have come from friends, secretaries, and people who are trained to work with dyslexics. I want you to know these tips now, so maybe you won't have to wait 25 years to learn how to do some things better and faster.

If you are having trouble with your school work, ask your teacher to adjust your homework for you. For example, if the assignment is for 50 addition problems, ask your teacher to reduce it to 25, which will take you the same amount of time to complete as the other students will need to work the 50 problems. And be organized. Have a special place for everything you need to do your homework. Always put your keys, purse or billfold and other important items in the same place.

Students need help to achieve their dreams. And having good examples to follow is helpful. I am always encouraged to learn that someone else with dyslexia has become successful in life. Here are three very famous people who had dyslexia. One was **Albert Einstein**, who "saw" the theory of relativity and then had to find a way to translate it into words.

Thomas Edison, the inventor of the light bulb and hundreds of other inventions, was also dyslexic. He wrote in his diary about never being able to do well at school, saying he always got the lowest grades in his class.

Nolan Ryan, former pitcher for the Texas Rangers, retired as the winningest baseball pitcher of all times. He has dyslexia, too.

These are just a few examples. And it's not to say that everyone with dyslexia is going to be famous. But it does tell you that you need to work your hardest, so that whatever you do, you will know it was your best!

Robert H. Flashman

H I G H E N E R G Y T A S K	L O W E N E R G Y T A S K	R A N K O R D E R	TO DO LIST DATE: _____ I will set goals I know I can reach, and learn to say no, based on what tasks I already have to do. I will not set myself up to fail and feel bad about myself.	T R A D E D W I T H	S T A R T E D	C O M P L E T E D

INTERRUPTIONS

Reward: If I accomplish today items # _____, then I will reward myself by _____.

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