

# What can you get done in less than an hour?

## Start small

It can be helpful to make a small-scale plan. Try setting an intention to make the most of even very short periods of time. You might think you need several consecutive hours to really get down to studying. But actually, a busy London life often means that this doesn't happen often. What's more, it can be difficult to maintain your focus over several hours.

## Can a tomato help?

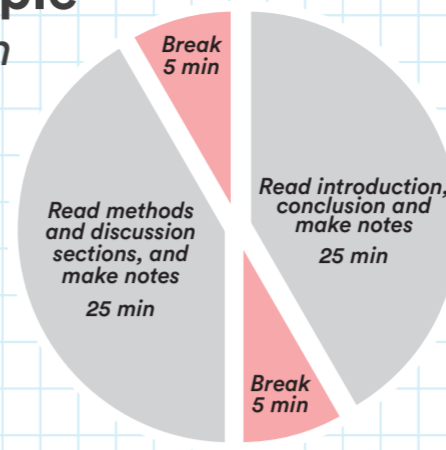
The Pomodoro Technique® uses 25-minute chunks to help you break large-scale tasks into smaller ones, set clear intentions, keep focus and avoid distractions, and think about broader objectives.

In a word, the idea is to set a specific intention and use a timer and do that ONE thing for 25-minutes (a "pomodoro", named after the Italian word for tomato - as in a tomato-shaped kitchen timer), followed by a 5-minute break. For those 25 minutes, you focus on only that task - close the door, switch off your phone, turn off your WiFi, etc. After four "pomodoros", take a longer break.

To find out more, visit [pomodoro.technique.com](http://pomodoro.technique.com).

## An example

Reading an academic paper



## Tick tock

By planning time on a small scale - with pomodoros or any other technique you like - you can find out how you actually use your time (where does it go?), reduce interruptions, assess how much time your tasks require more accurately, make better use of the time you have, and - well - get stuff done.

### Ask yourself:

- How long would the ideal study session be for you?
- How often do you take breaks when you study?
- How do you use time between lectures or classes? Or time during tube rides?
- Have you ever tried switching off your phone and your WiFi while you study?
- Where do you study well? Where is it impossible to concentrate?

# What's your favourite time of day?

## Early riser? Night owl?

Let's face it, not all times of the day are the same in terms of how well you can study. Some people can jump out of bed and tackle challenging problem sets first thing in the morning. Others can read complex texts effectively, late into the wee hours.

It's important to know how *you* work best. Observe the cycles of your concentration throughout the day, map out your attention and focus hour by hour.

Of course, every day won't be identical - but if you notice some patterns, consider planning your work according to your own rhythm. Think about the nature of the tasks you're trying to accomplish and what kind of focus and attention they require.

### How you feel

How you feel	5 am	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	
Bring it on! Anything's possible																									
I can manage to focus and get things done																									
I can listen and follow along - but don't expect miracles!																									
It's tough to focus for more than a few minutes																									
Forget it! If I try to study, I'll fall asleep																									

### Things you could do

- Read a tough text to prepare for a seminar
- Write a section of an essay or a project
- Analyse a problem that you need to solve
- Think about what you'd like to ask your professor during their office hours
- Review lecture slides
- Edit a draft essay
- Plan your reading
- Organise notes from lectures or readings
- Search for literature around a topic you want to find out more about
- Have a chat with your study group
- Tidy your room
- Make some food
- Watch TV
- Go to bed, or take a nap.
- Go for a walk and get some fresh air

### Ask yourself:

- When during the day do you have the best concentration and focus for intellectual work? When in the day do you have the most physical energy? Do your patterns of concentration vary across different days? If so, what factors affect how well you can stay focused?
- When you study, how long can you maintain good concentration before your mind begins to wander?
- What do you do when you realise you're really no longer paying attention to the task you're trying to get done? What do you think you should do?

# What does your week look like?

## Keep it regular

During term time, you'll probably have regular lectures, classes, seminars, and other events to attend each week. Map out your week on a timetable with each day and what you need to attend.

Think about what you need to do beforehand to prepare for each lecture or class - and schedule this in on a regular basis, too. This might include doing homework, reading, or meeting a teacher during office hours.

Then have a look at the time that you have left and decide what you want to do with it. In addition to studying, schedule time for other commitments: travel to and from LSE, laundry and tidying your room or your flat, eating, shopping, time with friends or family, paid work, eetc.

And, you know, have fun sometimes.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
5am							
6							
7							
8							
9							
10							
11							
12pm							
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							
7							
8							
9							
10							
11							
12am							
1							
2							
3							
4							

### Ask yourself:

- How are your various lectures, classes, seminars, and other regular activities distributed across the week?
- How many different hats do you wear in a typical week (eg, student, part-time worker, caregiver, avid game player, long distance runner, amateur accordion player)?
- What's your idea of work-life balance?

# How do you see your term?

Use the calendar inside to note key events this term. In addition to your deadlines and timelines, think about your goals for the term ahead, and the various activities that will be required to achieve them.

### Ask yourself:

- How do you prefer to pace yourself over time? Are you aware of the deadlines for all your formative and summative assignments?
- How do you use timelines to lead up to deadlines? What can you do to maintain your momentum across the 11 weeks of the term?
- What are you planning to do to develop your skills outside your coursework?