

Keep Learning | Student Voices: How I Manage my Bentley Schedule

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“Busy” seems to be synonymous with the term “Bentley student.” It’s not uncommon for a student to have an internship, work at a part-time job and be president of two student organizations — all while juggling a full course load. We love having lots of things going on.

I’m no exception. And with a schedule like that, it can be easy to become overwhelmed.

I’ve spent the last four years here at Bentley trying to master the right balance, and though I’m still no expert, here’s how I make it work:

Tip #1: Find Your Peak Hours

Group meetings, writing, tests, class, work, social time, exercise — all are necessary in college, but all require very different types of energy.

It’s no fun trying to write a paper for five hours, but feeling stuck the whole time. The trick to staying productive throughout the day is figuring out your “peak hours” for each activity.

For me, I try to schedule important meetings around 2pm, because that’s when I hit my slump and meetings give me a jolt of energy. I exercise in the morning while I still have the dedication necessary.

Even right now I’m taking advantage of my peak hours; I’m writing around 10pm because it’s when I feel most creative, but I’ll edit this in the morning when I’m more focused.

Try this: Pay attention to your energy levels for a week, writing down when you feel energized and what you were doing. Then experiment, experiment, experiment — switch up your schedule every day and see how your energy changes.

This also means you need to plan ahead! If you wait to write that paper until the morning it’s due, you won’t be able to choose to write during your peak hours.

Tip #2: Delegate Your Work

It can be tempting to live by the phrase, “If you want something done right, do it yourself.” But living that way can only lead to burnout.

I’ve struggled with this for years, but have made a real effort to start delegating this semester. One small change I’ve made is asking my group mates to send Outlook invites and reserve study rooms for our meetings, rather than always offering to do it myself. It may only take a few minutes each time, but with numerous group meetings every week that quickly adds up!

You could ask another person to take over scheduling group project meetings. See if a classmate could pick up dinner for your study session. Request that a fellow student org member hang up the event posters.

Even the small little tasks add up. I'm amazed at how much extra time it gives me!

It's another thing I can add to my list of [resolutions for my last semester at Bentley!](#)

If you're hesitant to ask for help, think about this: how many times a day do you say yes to helping someone? (*Hint: it's probably a lot.*)

Tip #3: Turn Off Notifications

About two months ago I turned off all notifications (except calls) on my computer and phone. Now, to figure out if I had a new email or Twitter notification, I had to actually open the apps.

That small additional step made a huge difference.

I admit it: when I'm bored, I still check my apps every five minutes. But not having my phone buzz constantly lets me actually get into a flow while working.

Emails, texts, replies on Twitter — all are just distractions. If something is dire, people will call. Otherwise, it makes more sense to tackle 15 emails at once for 30 minutes, rather than pausing your essay 15 times in two hours.

And if you feel the need to check apps, focus on these [apps that were made to enhance brainpower](#). At least you'll be productive while using them!

Bonus Tip: Reward Yourself

I consider this one a "bonus" because it's not actually about getting work done, but it will make a huge impact in your productivity levels.

I believe very strongly in the idea of "work hard, party hard." Whether you choose to relax by going to a concert in Boston or having a dinner party with friends, it's important to find balance in your life.

For example, last week my friends and I celebrated a belated pi day. My friend baked his amazing homemade beef pie and we enjoyed a casual Friday night dinner.

The week before, my friend from home drove down to visit and we took the [shuttle to Harvard Square](#) to see a Howie Day concert.

The important thing is to plan it in advance. My nights out with friends are pre-scheduled in my calendar every week for the next month — it gives me something to look forward to every day. And once it's in my calendar, I make sure I do my work in advance, so I don't have to cancel.

Add a weekly lunch with friends into your calendar, or a monthly trip to Boston (use this list of [20 free things to do in Boston](#) for inspiration). Whatever it is, make it a priority, and use it as motivation to stay productive throughout the week.

I hope you find these tips useful! Have any advice for me? Let me know at [@JenFWright](#) — I'd love to hear how you stay organized!



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- + **Time management Self-Assessment Worksheet**
- + **Projected versus Actual Time Log Worksheets**
- + **Time Management Worksheet**
- + **Sample Student Schedules**