"I couldn't find my keys this morning. When I finally found them I was running late for class. Then I realized that I hadn't finished all of my homework for the next class. I worked through lunch time so that I could finish my assignment and now I'm hungry, tired, and I feel really scattered."

If this sounds a little too familiar you may be in need of some organizational skills. Organization is "the act or process of putting the different parts of something in a certain order so that they can be found or used easily". This idea sheet will focus on two types of organization: organizing your time and organizing your materials.

**Time Organization**

In a study about junior doctors in the United Kingdom it was found that if they organized their time effectively they did better on their end of year examinations than students who seemed to struggle with time management. The time conscious students did better simply by arriving to their exam on time.

Succeeding in college requires you to organize your time well. The use of a planner can be critical. Research has found that using a schedule can increase a college student’s control over their life and help them to feel more relaxed. There are three useful levels of time organization: semester, weekly, and daily. To learn how to create these schedules see the Managing Your Time Idea Sheet (http://www.usu.edu/arc/idea_sheets/pdf/manage_your_time.pdf).

Once you have created schedules it is essential that you use them. Keep them in a place you frequently refer to. If you have a planner on your phone you can use that or you can put a planner in your bag and refer to it throughout the day.

**Materials Organization**

Organizing your materials is crucial to your college success. You may take fantastic notes, organize your time well in a planner, and create wonderful study guides, but if you don’t know where anything is then you can never use it.

**Notebook**

The first thing to organize is your notes, study guides, and other papers for each class. Keep a separate notebook for each class. Notes kept in the same place for all classes may cause you to mix them all together, run out of space to take notes, or accidentally write notes in the wrong place. However, if a separate notebook is kept for each class then you can keep notes separate and identifiable, have as much space as you need for detailed notes, and know exactly where to find the notes for a class.

Organize your notebook by dividing it into sections. This can be done with built in tabs, pieces of tape, sticky notes, etc. Create a section for notes and a section for homework.

If you lose a notebook then buy a new one as soon as possible. Successful students know that having a space to take notes each day in class is important and will always bring a notebook.

Choosing which type of notebook to use is up to you. However, it may be very useful to have notebooks with pockets, which allow you to keep track of loose leaf papers you are given in class and assignments to turn in. Create a specific spot for assignments to turn in and check this spot each time you go class to make certain that you have turned in each assignment. If you use a notebook without pockets use a separate folder for each class to organize these loose leaf papers.
**Bringing everything you need to class**

It's a terrible feeling when you realize that you completed your ten page paper, but forgot to grab it off your desk to turn in at the next class. Bringing everything you need for class to class is something that can be added to your daily schedule. At the end of each day look at your planner for the next day. Create a list of everything you will need for the day. Include items like pencils, erasers, keys, math notebook, history assignment, etc. Pack all of these things into your bag before you go to bed. Find a specific place for each item so that you know where everything is located ("my history homework is in the front pocket of the green folder"). If you do this each day then you won't wake up and be scrambling to find your keys or your math notebook. You can just grab your bag and head out the door.

**Home Space**

This final organization tip can help you organize your space at home. A difficult thing about organizing everything you need for school comes when you aren't certain where you placed things at home. The bag you organized the night before won't do you much good if you can't find it in the morning. Identify a place in your home to place your bag, jacket, car keys, etc. when you are finished using them. Your keys might have a special "launch pad" where they are placed each time you walk in your apartment so that you can find them again on the "launch pad" on the way out the door.

By spending a little time each day to organize your time and your materials you will find that each day will run smoother. You will no longer feel frantic throughout the day because you couldn't find your keys or didn't know what to do with specific periods of time. Instead your grades will improve and you will feel more confident in your academic abilities.

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