

Time and Stress Management

Theme *Composure Under Pressure: Building Discipline of Mind and Schedule*

STEP 1: SET INDUCTION/CASE VIGNETTE (20 MINUTES)

'The School Assignment Crunch'

It was 10:00 pm at home. Anu, a Class 11 student, was surrounded by open books, sticky notes all over the wall, and an untouched cup of tea gone cold hours ago. A science assignment was due the next morning, and her group had divided the work.

But Anu, being a perfectionist, had taken on extra work — "I will do the clean diagrams myself," she had said earlier, thinking she could manage.

Now, the pages blurred in front of her eyes. Her phone buzzed with messages:

- "Submit by 08:00 am sharp. Msg from teacher"
- "Tomorrow's science test is confirmed."
- "English oral presentation moved to next week."

Her heart raced. Her mind jumped from bones to enzymes to notes she had not even revised yet. She opened YouTube to play "background music" — five minutes later, she was scrolling aimlessly. At midnight, her roommate looked over and said gently, "Anu, you have been awake since 5:00 am, maybe sleep?" Anu snapped, "I cannot afford to rest! There is too much to do!"

By 3:00 am, her handwriting was uneven, her eyes dry, and her head throbbing. At 7:00 am, she dragged herself to school—exhausted, anxious, and unable to recall a single line from the science chapter she had read. During attendance, she realized she had forgotten her project file at home.

That evening, after school, her class teacher called her aside. "You know, Anu," she said kindly, "you do not struggle because you are lazy. You struggle because you are trying to do everything at once. Growing up is a journey, not a sprint. Manage your time, and your mind will follow".

Something clicked in that moment. Anu realized — her stress was not because she had *too little time*; it was because she had *too many unplanned priorities*.

That night, she drew a small 4-box grid in her notebook:



Urgent and Important (Necessity → Manage now)	Important but Not Urgent (Productivity → Focus and Plan)
Urgent but Not Important (Distraction → Delegate)	Neither (Waste → Minimize or shun)

She placed every task in a box. Suddenly, things looked simpler. This framework that classifies tasks into four quadrants based on urgency and importance is Eisenhower Matrix.

By choosing what to do *now*, *later*, or *not at all*, Anu felt something she had not felt all week — *control*. And that is where real stress management begins: *Not by doing more, but by planning better*.

STEP 2: FACULTY NARRATION (30 MINUTES)

Techniques to Manage Time and Stress

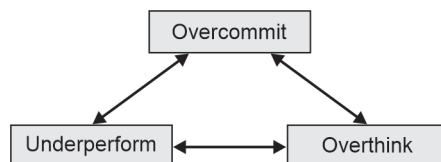
It was the start of the term. Classes, homework, projects, coaching, activities, and tests — everything seemed to arrive at once. Students often say, “I am busy from morning to night,” but few can answer the question — “Busy doing what?”.

Time management for adolescents is not about filling every hour. It is about creating structure in chaos.



1. Nature of Time Stress

In adolescent life, tasks can multiply faster than minutes. Without planning, students enter a vicious cycle:



This cycle drains motivation and fuels guilt — a classic pattern of academic burnout.

2. Techniques of Time Discipline

a. Prioritization: “Not Everything Urgent is Important.”

- Use the **Eisenhower Matrix** to classify tasks.
- It helps to decide what to do first, what to plan, what to delegate, and what to eliminate.
- Avoid ‘false emergencies’ (e.g. colour-coding notes instead of revising core content).

b. Structured Study Blocks: ‘Pomodoro Technique’

- Study 25 minutes, break for 5 minutes.
- Four such cycles, then a longer 15–20 minutes rest.
- Prevents mental fatigue and maintains attention.

Standard Pomodoro

25 minutes study → 5 minutes break

Repeat 4 cycles, then take a 20–30 minutes long break.

Best for:

- Moderate difficulty tasks
- Average attention span
- Long study sessions

Enhanced Pomodoro (for students and adolescents)

50 minutes study → 10 minutes break

Repeat 3 cycles → 30 minutes long break.

Why better:

- Allows deep reading
- Less cognitive switching
- Matches ultradian rhythm (~50–90 minutes)

Tips for effective Pomodoro

- Put phone outside the room or turn on 'focus mode'
- Use a timer with a soft alarm
- During breaks → Stand, stretch, walk, hydrate
- Do not open social media during breaks
- Use '2-minute rule': If a thought appears, write it on paper and return later
- Keep study materials pre-arranged to reduce startup time

c. The '3R' Strategy: Record, Reflect, Replan

- **Record:** Track where your time actually goes
- **Reflect:** Identify wastage (scrolling, over-discussion, perfectionism)
- **Replan:** Adjust goals weekly instead of daily

3. Managing Stress: The Mind–Body Link

When deadlines pile up, the body reacts before the mind does. Racing heart, tight shoulders, shallow breath — these are not weakness, they are warning signs.

Regulation tools:

- **4–7–8 breathing:**
 - Inhale 4 sec → Hold 7 seconds → Exhale 8 seconds.
- **Grounding (5–4–3–2–1):** Identify the following:
 - 5 things you can 'see'
 - 4 things you can 'touch'
 - 3 things you can 'hear'
 - 2 things you can 'smell'
 - 1 thing you can 'taste'
- **Mini mind breaks:** 3-minute mindful pauses between sessions to reset. The goal is not to eliminate stress, but to build 'resilience' — the ability to recover quickly and re-focus.

4. Integrated Formula: 'Pause, Plan, Prioritize'

Time and stress are two sides of the same coin. When you manage your time, your stress declines; when you regulate your stress, your time use improves. The balance comes from a disciplined routine and flexible mindset.

5. Online Applications Available for Time and Stress Management

"You cannot control every demand in school and life, but you can control how you schedule and respond to them."

Time management	Todoist	
	Ticktick	
	Notion	
	Forest	
Stress management	Calm	
	Headspace	
	Insight timer	
Habit and wellbeing trackers	Apple health	
	Habitica	
	Daylio	
	Happify	



STEP 3: GROUP ACTIVITY: 'THE SMART SCHEDULER' (20 MINUTES)

Eisenhower Matrix Activity Setup

- Divide participants into groups of 5–6.
- Give each group 12 task cards (examples are given below):
 1. Responding to routine administrative WhatsApp messages from the class group.
 2. Watching random YouTube videos unrelated to studies or personal growth.
 3. Preparing a weekly study plan for school subjects.

4. Helping a friend locate a textbook just before your lecture starts.
5. Working on a long-term research project.
6. Practising for a class presentation, debate, or school performance.
7. Collecting signatures for attendance or forms that someone else could handle.
8. Submitting an internal assessment assignment due today.
9. Browsing online shopping sites out of boredom.
10. Preparing for a class test or oral presentation happening in the next hour.
11. Attending a scheduled workshop on communication skills, sports, art, or first aid.
12. Learning a new software skill relevant to your studies or profession.

Task

Arrange all task cards into the appropriate quadrant of the Eisenhower matrix:

- Quadrant I: Urgent and important (Do)
- Quadrant II: Important but not urgent (Plan)
- Quadrant III: Urgent but not important (Delegate)
- Quadrant IV: Neither urgent nor important (Eliminate)

Scoring

- +2 points for each task correctly placed.
- -1 point for each incorrectly placed task.
- -2 points for identifying a task as a 'stress trap' and placing it incorrectly (e.g. considering 'all-night studying before an exam' as a good planning activity under important but not urgent).
- +3 bonus points if the team correctly explains why a task belongs in a particular quadrant.
- +5 bonus points for the team with the highest total score.

Debrief Discussion

Linking outcomes to common pitfalls:

- Over-scheduling → Fatigue
- Multitasking → Reduced recall
- No breaks → Cognitive exhaustion
- Structured time → Better focus and mood

STEP 4: GROUP DISCUSSION (20 MINUTES)

1. What Causes Time Pressure in Your Day?

- Where do you lose most time daily?
- Is it poor planning, procrastination, or distractions?

Expected Talking Points

- Scattered attention (social media, random study)
- "Last-minute" preparation cycles
- Lack of prioritization
- Sleep deprivation leading to poor efficiency

2. What Stress Symptoms do You Notice before Burnout?

- Physical (fatigue, headache, insomnia)?
- Emotional (irritability, guilt, panic)?

Expected Talking Points

- Skipping meals or sleep
- Declining focus or motivation
- Avoiding study tasks
- Feeling anxious before every exam

3. What One Habit could Improve Your Time–Stress Balance?

Expected Talking Points

- Fixed sleep–wake schedule
- 10-minute evening review of next day’s plan
- Weekly ‘digital detox’ day

Debrief Summary

- Time management is not about doing everything—it is about doing the right things with *right energy*.
- Stress management is not about being calm always—it is about *recovering faster* when you are not.

STEP 5: SELF COMPOSURE TRACKER

1. When overwhelmed, I:
 - a. Push harder and sleep less
 - b. Pause and re-prioritize ✓
2. My biggest time waster:
 - a. Distractions and perfectionism ✓
 - b. Lack of deadlines
3. My best stress reliever:
 - a. Music and mindful breathing ✓
 - b. More caffeine



TAKE HOME MESSAGE

- “Master time to conquer stress.”
- In daily life, efficiency is endurance.
- Time discipline builds mental clarity.
- Mind discipline builds professional strength.
- Plan your day. Protect your calm. Perform with purpose.