The 5-step plan

Need a quick fix to get your time under control? Trying to juggle lots of different commitments? Are all your deadlines coming up at once? If it feels like your time is out of control and you don't know how to get it all done, try this quick plan to get back on top of things.

1. **List everything you need to do**

Being reminded of how much you have to do may feel like the last thing you want. But while you don't have a proper idea of what you need to do, it'll carry on feeling overwhelming. Listing it is the first step in taking control.

2. **Break down big tasks into smaller steps**

Tasks always feel less overwhelming if you tackle them one step at a time. Rather than ‘write essay’ try thinking ‘make notes on relevant points for essay’ or ‘start to shape and plan the essay’ or ‘write the introduction’.

3. **Organise tasks under three headings - now, soon and later**

Be realistic about what needs doing now - assignment deadlines, work or family commitments may be the top priorities; there will be some other things that can usually wait till later. Some of the things under the 'later' heading may turn out to be things you don't need to do after all.

4. **Do something from the 'now' list immediately and tick it off the list**

Getting one thing done will help you feel calmer. If you have a deadline coming up, start to get that piece of work out of the way first, even (perhaps especially) if it's the one thing you've been avoiding. If you're stuck because you don't understand something, go back to basics and build up from there – or ask for help.

5. **Now put the other tasks in priority order and make a plan to tackle them**

Fit what you have to do into the time you have to do it in. We could always do a better job with more time, but you're not expected to achieve perfection in everything you do.