

Time Management Tips

1. Create a weekly schedule.

This will help you:

- Reduce stress and feel less overwhelmed.
- Use small chunks of time more effectively.
- Resist spending too much time on one thing.
- Avoid spending time trying to decide where to start/what to work on.

2. Read efficiently.

- If possible, annotate in the book (notes in the margins, highlighting scheme, short phrase about the facts to jog your memory). If you have a used book that is already marked up, consider using post-it notes instead.
- Read for the significance of the case: why did the casebook include, and the professor assign, *this* case? What does it add to the concept you are discussing, to the doctrine, to the body of law? What does it tell you that you didn't already know?
- Focus on what the cases represent (rule, sub-rule, defense, exception, important nuance, defining a key term, demonstration of a tension or important policy issue/theme, a significantly different set of facts, etc.)

3. Go to class and take good notes.

- Go to every class even if you are unprepared.
- If possible, take notes by hand.
- Do not take notes in the same document as your case briefs, or if you do, do it in a different color. You need to know what *your professor* thinks is important in addition to what you thought was important.
- Be sure to note any discussion of policy. Come back to this when you are reviewing and outlining.

4. Review early and often.

- Review throughout the semester.
- When you do the reading for a class, spend the first ten minutes reviewing your notes from the last class. This is helpful because: (1) reviewing more often is better than reviewing less often—it will help you learn the material; and (2) reviewing before reading will help you situate the new material in the context and framework of the old

material—*e.g.*, what do the new cases add to what you have already learned and what is their significance *relative to* the old material?

- At the end of a unit, review the material for that unit. Pull out key concepts, rules, policy/themes, etc. and write them down in a way that makes sense to you. This is your “outline.”
- If you can, at the end of each unit, do some hypos on that topic. Be sure to write out your answer as you would on an exam. In addition to learning the substantive law, you also are practicing written legal analysis.
- Go to office hours when something doesn’t make sense in class or during your review of each unit. Avoid the end-of-semester rush, get more personalized time, and get all of your questions answered throughout the semester instead of cramming at the end.

5. Outlining

- Outline at the end of each unit. Don’t wait until the end of the semester to start outlining.
- Organize by concepts, not by cases.
- Do not include your case briefs. One or two sentences about the facts of key cases should be sufficient.
- Focus on understanding the body of law as a whole: how do the different concepts fit together, where are there tensions, etc.?
- Consider policy implications and issues. What policy issues did your professor focus on? Why do we have these rules, what purpose do they serve, what behaviors do they incentivize or disincentivize, what groups do they advantage/disadvantage, etc.

6. Practice!

- Do *lots* of practice exams. Doing hypos and practice questions is the best way to learn both the substantive material and legal analysis skills. You will be tested on both.
 - Throughout the semester (*e.g.*, when you do your unit review), write out the answers to short hypos to help you learn the material. The *Examples and Explanations* series, on reserve in the law library, is great for this.
 - Toward the middle of the semester, start taking practice exams under exam-taking conditions: timed and written in complete sentences.
 - Review your answer against a sample answer or discuss with a friend.
- So long as the format is the same (issue spotter, multiple choice, policy), practice exam questions do not have to be from your professor.
- Do not wait until you have “learned” the material or are done with reviewing/outlining to do hypos and practice exam questions. Again, doing hypos and practice questions is the best to learn both the substantive material and legal analysis skills. Make this part of your weekly schedule.

7. Avoid Getting Lost in Too Many Resources

- Use commercial outlines sparingly. Pick one that works for you or that your professor recommended.
- Use sample outlines sparingly. The value is in making. Review to get ideas about structure and organization. Don't copy content.
- Study groups are not for everyone. Think about how you learn, what works for you, and what you did in undergrad.

8. Don't take on too much.

- Resist taking on too many extracurricular activities, especially in your first semester.
- Avoid signing up for something because people say you should. Instead, think strategically about what you hope to gain from an activity.
 - Is personally rewarding and will help keep you grounded?
 - Will help you find community and a sense of belonging?
 - Is it relevant to your chosen career path?
 - Is it fun?
- We recommend limiting yourself to two activities in your first semester (*e.g.*, student group + pro bono project; student group + journal; journal + pro bono project; etc.)
- If you take on too much (it happens!) and find yourself overwhelmed, schedule a meeting with Student Services. They can help.

9. Be mindful in how you manage your stress.

- Channel your stress into concrete action. Take action regarding grades and jobs—but don't worry about the outcome, which you can't control.
- Remind yourself of the endgame. Law school is the beginning, not the end. Grades are one small step. Think big picture about why you are in law school, what you want to do, and think of grades as a way to get there, not as an end in and of themselves. Learn the material because you want to know it and understand it, not for a grade.
- Take care of yourself. Eat foods that give you energy, exercise (even if it is just a ten-minute walk around campus between classes), keep in touch with and lean on your friends and family, and get enough sleep.
- Get help early. There are lots of resources available. Student Services is a good place to start.

10. Questions? Schedule a meeting with the ASP Team: <https://BerkeleyLawASP.as.me>.