



# Managing Your Time as a College Student

Presented by:  
Student Success Services



# True or False

You can manage your time.





# True or False

You can manage time.

**FALSE**



# True or False

You can manage time.

**FALSE**

**You can only manage your  
behaviors.**

# **First Step: BE REAL with yourself.**

- Identify what **MUST** be done each day.
  - Commitments? Necessities?
- Take a real look at what's left to do and what time you have (and don't panic!)



## **Second Step: Identify** what needs to happen (today? daily? weekly?)

- List it all

## **Third Step: Prioritize & Organize**

- A Planner is your friend!
- The Eisenhower Matrix



# The Eisenhower Decision Matrix





# **Biggest Pitfalls (& Biggest Lies) of Time and Task Management for College Students**





# Biggest Pitfalls (and Biggest Lies)

- **Failure to prioritize tasks**

**THE BIG LIE:** *I can get everything done, as long as I just start*

# Pitfall: Not Prioritizing

Students who feel overwhelmed by so many tasks to do often just jump blindly into doing “something” when they do begin working. However, you need to prioritize your tasks and your time!

- You might feel good about finishing an assignment that isn’t due until 3 days from now...but what about the assignment that was due an hour ago?



# Strategies: Prioritizing

- **Determine what is URGENT and Less Urgent**
  - Know the deadlines for assignments, bills you need to pay, etc.
- **Determine what is IMPORTANT and Less Important**
  - While every point counts, sometimes you might have to choose between an assignment that will heavily affect your grade and one that will have less effect if you don't get it turned in on time or at all.
  - While your grades are important, so is your health, well-being, and family. Life often involves prioritizing some things over others but then doing our best to manage those important but lower priority things.

*Tip: Use the Eisenhower Matrix!*





## Biggest Pitfalls (Biggest Lies)

- Underestimating **time on task**.  
**THE BIG LIE:** *This won't take too long.*



# Pitfall: Time on Task

Why do students underestimate time on task (TOT)?

- In college, the assignments have more complex instructions.
- In college, the assignments require more depth of thought and response.
- In college, the assignments require more professionalism in presentation.

*“This won’t take too long.”*



# Strategy: Time on Task

To combat the reasons students underestimate time on task...

3X



**Estimate three times as much time per assignment as you did for high school work.**



# Biggest Pitfalls (and Biggest Lies)

- Mismanagement of **unstructured time**.  
**THE BIG LIE:** *I have plenty of time.*



# Pitfall: Unstructured Time

Why do students mismanage  
their unstructured time?

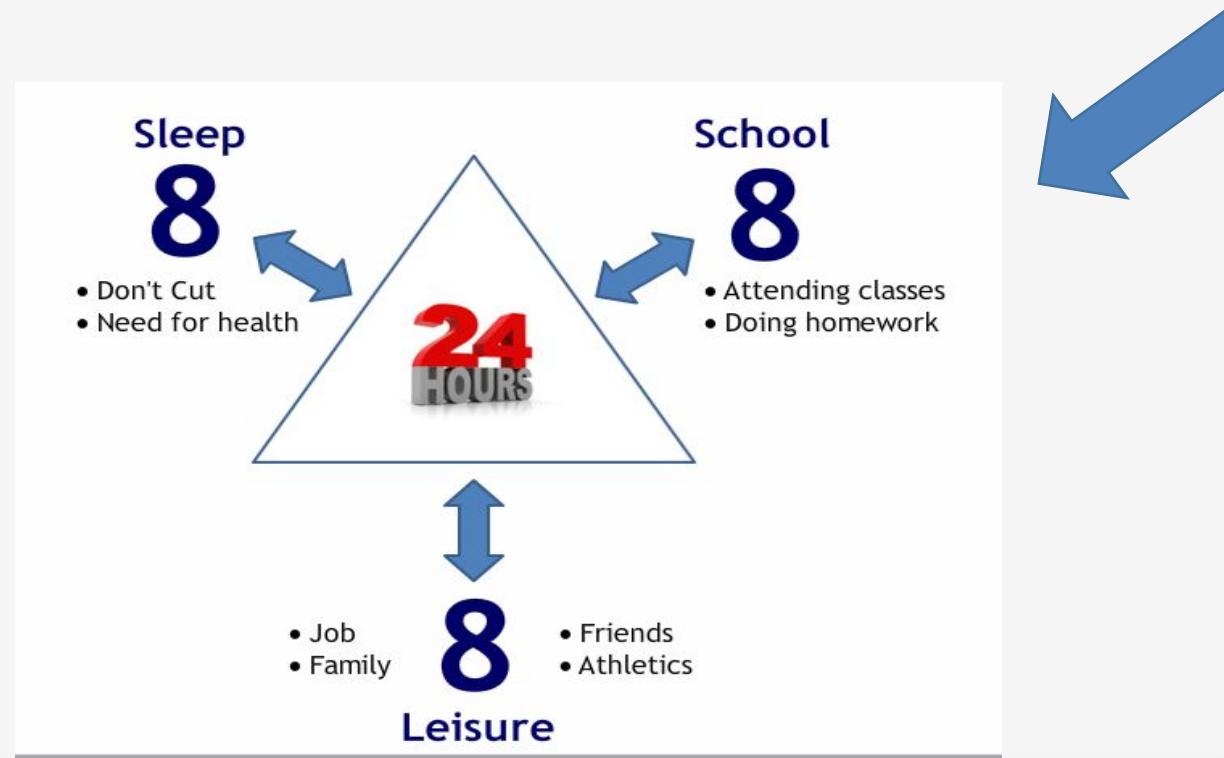
- They have much more “free” time than they did in high school.
- They may not have developed the skills to manage their time.
- They don’t know how much time they should budget per week.

GMT-06	Sun 9/11	Mon 9/12	Tue 9/13	Wed 9/14	Thu 9/15	Fri 9/16	Sat 9/17
5am							
6am							
7am							
8am		8 – 9 WRTG 1310		8 – 9 WRTG 1310		8 – 9 WRTG 1310	
9am		9 – 10 HIST 1312	9:25 – 10:40 SPCH 1300	9 – 10 HIST 1312	9:25 – 10:40 SPCH 1300	9 – 10 HIST 1312	
10am							
11am		11 – 12p PSYC 1301		11 – 12p PSYC 1301		11 – 12p PSYC 1301	
12pm				12:15p – 1:30p SOCI 1300		12:15p – 1:30p SOCI 1300	
1pm							
2pm							
3pm							
4pm							

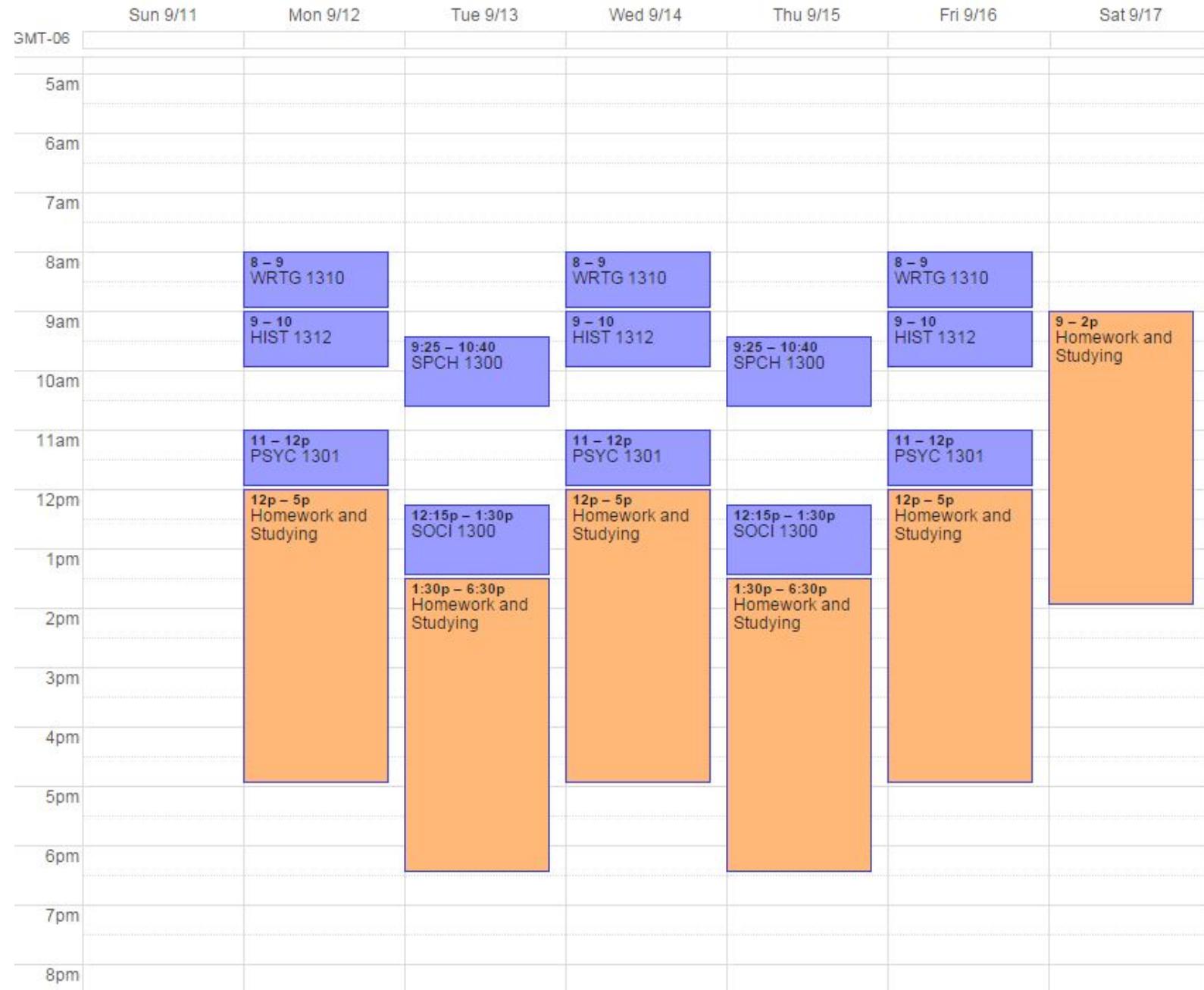
*“I have plenty of time.”*



# Strategy: Unstructured Time



3 hours in class a day +  
5 hours of homework  
or studying a day



## Strategy: Unstructured Time

6 x 5 = 30 hours for  
homework and  
studying AND you  
have your nights  
free!



## Biggest Pitfalls (and Biggest Lies)

- Lack of **immediate consequence**.  
**THE BIG LIE:** *It isn't worth many points.*

# Pitfall: Immediate Consequence

Why do students not feel the immediate consequence of missing an assignment?

- They think it is not worth much of the overall grade.
- They think their professor will drop low grades, give bonus opportunities, or provide extra work.
- They do not understand how their grade is actually calculated.



$$\begin{aligned} 690/1000 &= D \\ 700/1000 &= C \end{aligned}$$

*“It isn’t worth many points.”*

# Strategies: Immediate Consequence

- **ADOPT THE MANTRA: EVERYTHING COUNTS!**
- Know how the grade is calculated.
- Prioritize weight of assignments.
- **Complete small tasks immediately when possible.**
- Know *your WHY* and the assignment's *WHY*.



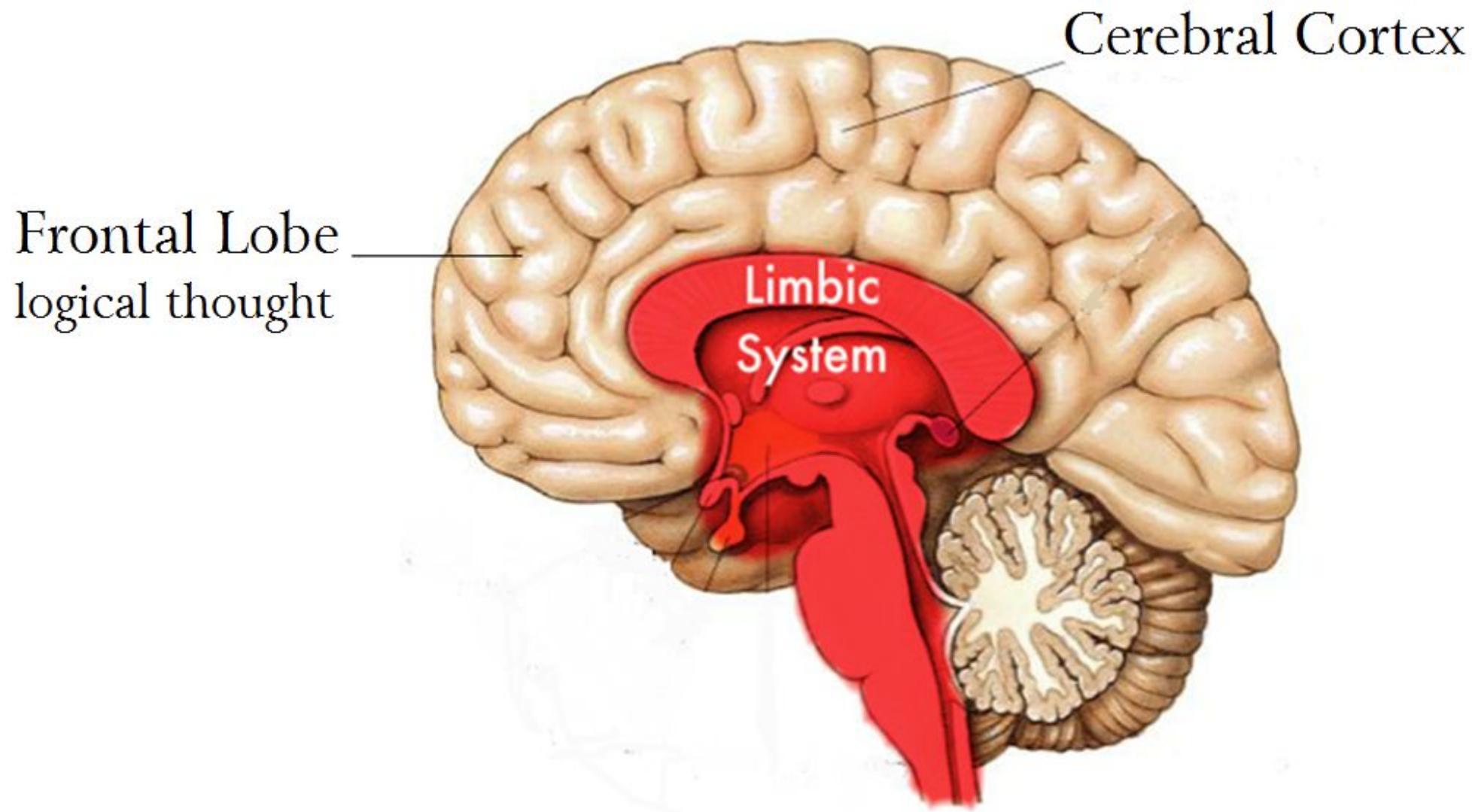
## More Strategies:

- Break down large tasks into smaller tasks.
- Space out tasks over time.
- Schedule micro-breaks every 20-30 minutes of work.
- Schedule 5-15-minute breaks every 2 hours of work.
- Develop a daily top three.
- Eat the frog.

But what if I still don't manage my time, I  
mean, my behaviors well?

Procrastinators, Unite!...well, maybe tomorrow

**Procrastination** is “a *fight* that is sparked between two parts of the mind when it’s faced with a distasteful activity: a battle of the limbic system (the unconscious zone that includes the pleasure center) and the prefrontal cortex (the internal “planner”). When the limbic system wins, and that’s pretty often, the result is putting off for tomorrow what could (and should) be done today” (Spencer, 2016).



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**Prefrontal cortex**—newer, weaker, separates us from animals, “gets the job done,” not automatic

**Limbic system**—oldest, most dominant, automatic (Pychyl, 2010)



# The Signs of Procrastination

(Hazard, 2011)

- Waiting to do things until the last minute
- Not setting or honoring personal deadlines
- Not taking action until a crisis develops
- Not setting daily schedules and goals for one's time
- Not setting personal priorities for accomplishing tasks
- Spending substantial time unproductively doing trivial things
- Saying "yes" to every request and invitation
- Overcommitting, overscheduling
- Doing a task too quickly and sloppily
- Setting perfection as the standard of a task
- Leaving so little time to do a task that one cannot accommodate an emergency
- Not reading or listening to instructions on how to do the task
- Pretending to work on the task
- Not asking others for help

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Which type are you?

10-14 points:

Adrenaline Junkie

6-9 points: Lover of  
Living on the Edge

1-5 points:

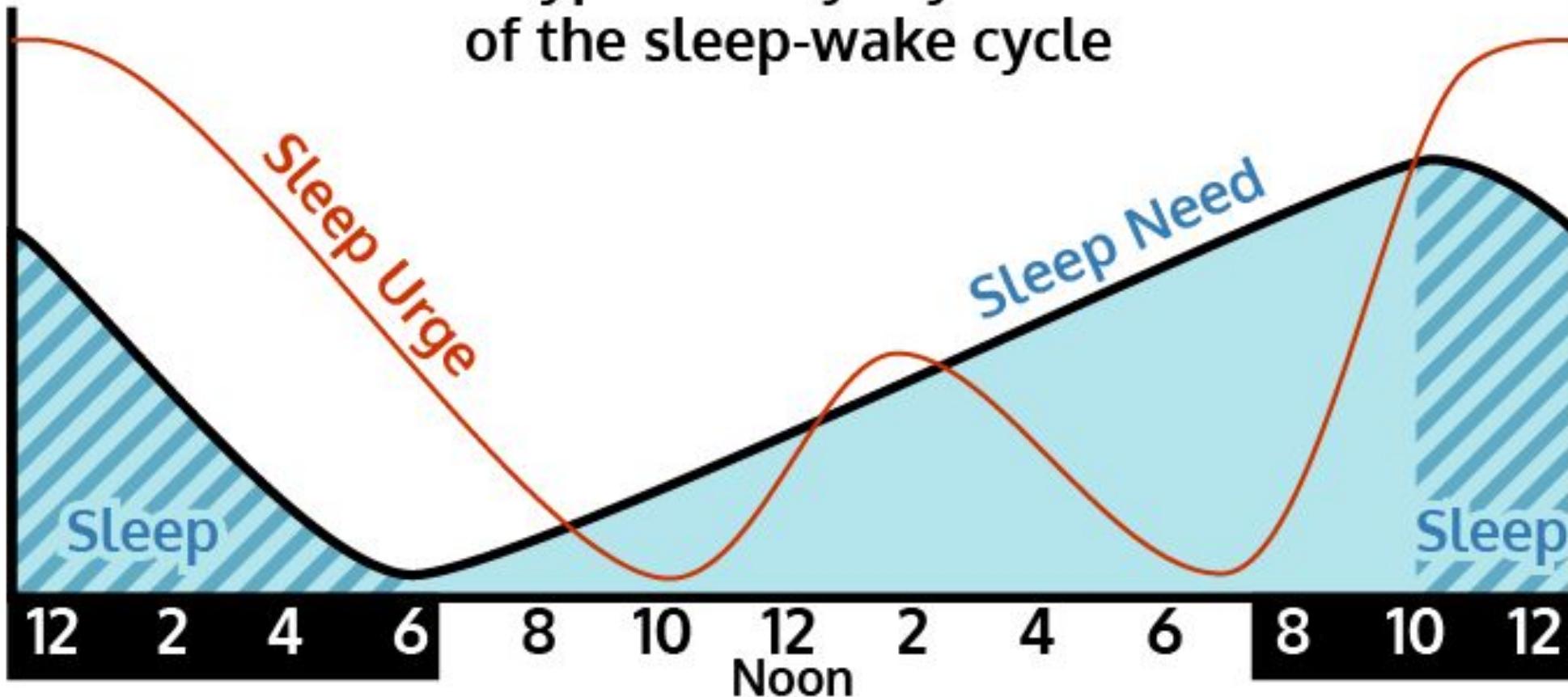
Putting-it-off Flirt



# Strategies For Fighting Procrastination:

- Stop lying to yourself! Get real.
- Use your biology to your advantage.

Typical daily rhythm  
of the sleep-wake cycle



# **Sometimes you have to do DAMAGE CONTROL!**

- Screwed up? Do what you can.
- Contact your professor - and be honest.
- Accept the consequences - but figure out how to do better in future.
- Make Plan B.



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