**Time Management****Tips and Tricks**

**Prioritize/Don’t Procrastinate**

Figure out the most important projects and tasks in your day or week and get those done first. Knocking your biggest tasks off the list earlier will give you a leg up on your day and allow you to complete easier tasks at the end of the day when you are winding down. Use the calendars provided by OPI, MASBO, and your school to keep track of all deadlines in one place (I use my outlook calendar). Prioritize based on deadlines and set completion dates early in case of mishaps, then you can still finish on time.

**Stay Focused/Turn Off Distractions**

Begin your day by checking your calendar and email. This will allow you to make adjustments to your schedule. Then turn off your email alerts, let the phone go to voicemail, close your door, and don’t get distracted by trying to always multi-task. The time you have to deliver a very important task under strict time restrictions is perhaps not the best time for multitasking, you need to focus. When you have finished the task at hand, then you can take a break. Get up, move around, step outside for a moment, stretch, get some coffee. When you come back you can check your email, retrieve your voice messages and get started on your next task.

**Plan For Interruptions/Manage Other People’s Expectations**

If you have 8 hours to work, plan to achieve your goals for the day in 7 hours. Distractions will always come, you have to be proactive. If you are the type that always drops everything you are doing to assist others, your colleagues will assume that you will always do this. Teach your colleagues that your time is important and you cannot always drop everything to help them immediately.

**Learn To Say No/Delegate if Possible**

You have to know when it is not OK to take on more responsibilities, even if they are opportunities. You should aim to accept only the tasks that you are certain you will have enough time to complete. Delegate tasks if possible.

**Keep Your Space Clean/Stay Organized**

Apply the one-touch principle to email and paper. When you receive a piece of paper or an email, decide to attend to it immediately and completely. Can it be filed, forwarded, delegated, broken down into smaller tasks or put in the trash. I try to keep up with filing so that I don’t have stacks of paper on my desk. At the end of the day a clean desk helps me feel that I have been productive and gives me motivation for the next day. Keeping everything in its place also allows others to come into my office and find what they need.

**Close Your Day**

Appraise, re-prioritize and prepare. Set aside the last 15 minutes of each day to appraise your work. Ask yourself, “What did I accomplish? What did I leave on the table?”. Look at your schedule for the next day and readjust as needed. Consider issues that came up during the day, including what you need to do about them and how. Prepare for the next day.

**Take Care of Yourself**

Get enough sleep, exercise, eat healthy, rest and relax. Always ensure that you get enough sleep as it re-energized your body. Healthy eating and exercise has been proven to improve your ability to focus and allow your mind to operate better. Stay hydrated, I keep a large water bottle on my desk and fill it often. Working constantly can wear you down mentally and physically, that why it’s vital to find time to relax in your busy schedule. Spending time relaxing at the beach or with your family are great ways to slow down the constant rush of the work week and make sure you’re refreshed. Since our summers are so busy, I plan a fall vacation and it has been very beneficial. I have had to educate the staff on how busy my work load is in the summer, and they now understand why I vacation in the fall.