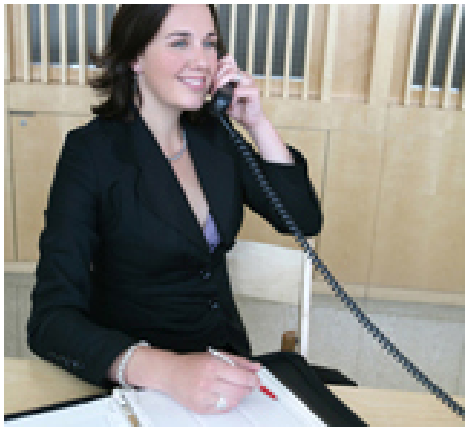
To Do List Management: Using your list to create a focused day



To Do list management is a task that most of us have to deal with, regardless of our profession. In fact, many people struggle with creating and using a To Do list. The tips listed below give you valuable information about creating a To Do list management system that works for you.

Everyone has plenty to do in their workday and interruptions are an everyday occurrence. Being able to stay focused allows you to not only get things crossed off your To Do List but gives you a sense of real accomplishment at the end of the day. Keep these tips in mind when working on your To Do List:

- Ignore your email at least for the first hour of your day. You may be tempted to “do a quick check” but there’s no such thing. While most emails are important, they aren’t urgent and we often waste more time hanging out in the Inbox than anywhere else in our office.
- Review your calendar of the day’s appointments, making note of any meeting requiring paperwork you’ll need to prepare while creating you To Do list. This ensures that the most urgent tasks on your to do list get completed first.
- Prioritize your To Do List for the day. Decide what absolutely must get done today and prioritize accordingly. This will serve as a reminder of the tasks that need your attention throughout the day so you’ll be less apt to waste time elsewhere.
- Make phone calls early. You’ll be able to cross a few things off your To Do list immediately. This also helps you to catch people before they get busy with meetings and other appointments.
- Designate specific times of the day to check emails and voicemails. This will drastically cut down on your interruptions but will also give you concentrated blocks of time to get back to others. Ideal times will vary, but many find that checking email mid-morning, just after lunch, mid afternoon and finally about thirty minutes before leaving the office works well. After checking mailboxes, return to your To Do list; procrastinating in email won’t help you cross things off!
- Take the last 15 minutes each day to review your To Do list and assess which things will need to be completed the next day. Tidy and put things away in your office. Take home any personal items that may have come with you to work. Walking in to a non-cluttered office is a wonderful way to start your day and you’ll be glad you took the time to put things away.
- Finally, review your calendar and your tentative To-Do list for tomorrow. This is a great way to avoid overlooking early morning breakfast meetings or bigger projects requiring your attention.

To do list management does not need to be a tedious task. Just be aware of your To Do list and continue to cross things off; there’s nothing quite like it!

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