



# How to Make Your To-Do List More Effective

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You already know that to-do lists help you get focused and organized throughout the day.

***When you have your to-do list in hand, you're freeing your mind from all the disorganized thoughts and, instead, getting them down on paper.***

However, this technique can go awry if your to-do list isn't organized as well as it should be. You might lose your motivation and drive and, at the end of the day, you may notice that most of the things from your list are not crossed off.

### Follow these tips to create an effective to-do list:

- 1. Clarify Priorities.** It may help you to develop some sort of ranking system for your to-do list. Certainly every item on the list can't be equally important. You can even use a number system and rank them from 1 to 5. Items ranked 1 might have a lower priority, while the 5s are tasks you should attend to first.
  - You should also clarify your priorities in the sense that ***you need to leave yourself detailed instructions.*** Figure out the: who, what, where, when and why of items that may be complicated. This way, when it comes time to tackle the task, you won't skip over them simply because they seem too complex to complete.
- 2. Pare Down the List.** You need to complete tasks or part of tasks one step at a time. If you have 15 minutes to spare, find something on the list that you can complete in that time period. It's common to tell yourself that 15 minutes is not enough time to do something, but all those 15-minute chunks add up to something huge. At the end of the day ***you'll be surprised how much you've accomplished in small increments.***

- 3. Include Flex Time.** If your to-do list is too rigid, it simply won't be effective. You absolutely need to include some flexibility and breathing room in your day. Try not to jam pack your day with unreasonable goals, otherwise, you'll be at risk of disappointment.
- 4. Add in Something Fun.** Your to-do list is no doubt full of things you may not be looking forward. That's why integrating fun activities and tasks should also be a priority! When you add in a fun item it doesn't feel like work. It may even feel like a break. When you return to the less desirable items, you'll be more motivated to actually get them done.
- 5. Don't List Too Much. *It's vital not to overwhelm yourself.*** While some days might be action packed in order to reach certain deadlines, you need to avoid this level of stress on a regular basis. If there's too much on your plate, or you have to work too fast, you can't possibly enjoy yourself and you'll only end up frustrated and overwhelmed.
- 6. Keep It Organized.** Your list needs to be organized in a way that makes you feel comfortable. There are many options nowadays, especially with digital devices. However, the old-fashioned pen and paper method may be what works best for you. You can also opt for using the internet or even your cell phone or mobile device to keep your list organized.