

KEY TO GETTING MORE DONE IN A DAY

In the book *Your Brain at Work* by David Rock, he makes the impression over and over again that getting ideas out of your head and onto paper (or app) can help you be at your best performance. To be honest, you'll find this advice in just about every productivity book. The concept is rooted in our neurobiology. We can only hold onto so much at once in our brains before we start to falter.

For most of us, that means endless to do lists. And, to be honest with you, that's what I used to do when I was juggling grad school tasks, a full time job, and household things. You know, life stuff. It didn't work out very well. I was always tinkering with my method in order to make myself more efficient, more productive.

So, why would you take the time to make a list?

- ◆ Saves time
- ◆ Makes you productive
- ◆ Focuses the life
- ◆ Gives free time
- ◆ Gives you control
- ◆ If you don't, you can fall behind and things accumulate
- ◆ Calm, control in all areas of life
- ◆ Moves you forward each day in ALL areas, business, family, and self
- ◆ You'll feel great
- ◆ People will think more highly of you
- ◆ You will think more clearly
- ◆ Feel in control and relief

These all sound like good reasons to keep a list. And, of course, there are some common tips when it comes to getting the most out of even just a simple list to structure your days.

- ◆ Write it -- cut mental clutter by writing a to do list for each day
- ◆ Verbalise it -- write the verb
- ◆ Post it -- so you can see it all day
- ◆ Adjust it -- leave space between each item, and update it as needed
- ◆ Assign times -- Write the time you are going to do it or time block it in.
- ◆ Check it off -- Enjoy the thrill of it. Red pens, gold stars, whatever.
- ◆ Colour Code it -- to make the priorities for work vs home stand out
- ◆ Evaluate it -- give that gold star and smiley face

Of course, there are different approaches. 4 different approaches, in fact.

- ◆ Simple -- Crisis and memory – jotting things down as they come up
- ◆ The visual leave it out method -- long term ones
 - ◆ Leaving things out where you can see it -- but it becomes a cluttered mess

- ◆ Written bullet points with no separation
 - ◆ The most common (appts, things to do, etc.)
- ◆ Smart planning
 - ◆ Appts first
 - ◆ To dos next
 - ◆ Errands
 - ◆ Calls and emails
 - ◆ Put it on the calendar -- blocking and creative checks for tasks

We're going to focus on the last one. Smart planning. It's been a huge game changer for me this quarter in working around ALL THE THINGS and ADHD.

Tools

- ◆ Calendar
- ◆ To-do list
- ◆ Planner (digital or paper)
- ◆ Move forward to a better day if not done -- but put an exclamation before it. If you accumulate 3 exclamations, get rid of it as it wasn't important enough to do.
- ◆ Master list (projects, goals, tasks, etc.)
- ◆ Project list (breaking down the project to bits)
 - ◆ Assign a date
 - ◆ Plan several Saturdays out.
- ◆ To-do list
- ◆ Use routines to help with repeatable tasks (like cleanup, paperwork, etc.)

Free tools to start:

- [Scattered Squirrel](#) (week, hourly layout)
- [Scattered Squirrel](#) (other options with priority boxes)
- [Buttomed Up](#) (24h day layout)
- [Buttomed Up](#) (18h day layout)
- [Buttomed Up](#) (Project Planner, master)
- [Buttomed Up](#) (Project Planner, single)
- [Buttomed Up](#) (Mass to do list with category dump)

There are literally hundreds of people, mostly women, who do these and put them up on their website for the cost of an email. Still, it'll give you the chance to try the method without investing in a planner until you know it works.

I recommend laminating the printouts, then you can use a wet erase marker to reuse it daily.