# Introducing the Eisenhower Matrix

[**https://youtu.be/tT89OZ7TNwc**](https://youtu.be/tT89OZ7TNwc)

**Where does the name come from?**

Dwight D. Eisenhower was the 34th President of the United States from 1953 until 1961. Before becoming President, he served as a general in the United States Army and as the Allied Forces Supreme Commander during World War II. He also later became NATO’s first supreme commander.  
Dwight had to make tough decisions continuously about which of the many tasks he should focus on each day. This finally led him to invent the world-famous Eisenhower principle, which today helps us prioritize by urgency and importance.

**How to use the Eisenhower Matrix?**

Prioritizing tasks by urgency and importance results in 4 quadrants with different work strategies:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **➀ Do First**  First focus on important tasks to be done the same day. | **➁ Schedule**  Important, but not-so-urgent stuff should be scheduled. |
| **➂ Delegate**  What’s urgent, but less important, delegate to others. | **➃ Don’t Do**  What’s neither urgent nor important, don’t do at all. |

We call the first quadrant *Do first* as its tasks are important for your life and career and need to be done today or tomorrow at the latest. You could use a timer to help you concentrate while trying to get as much of them done as possible.

An example of this type of task could be to review an important document for your manager.

The second quadrant we call *Schedule*. Its tasks are important but less urgent. You should list tasks you need to put in your calendar here.

An example of that could be a long-planned restart of your gym activity.  
Professional time managers leave fewer things unplanned and therefore try to manage most of their work in the second quadrant, reducing stress by terminating urgent and important to-dos to a reasonable date in the near future whenever a new task comes in.

The third quadrant is for those tasks you could *delegate* as they are less important to you than others but still pretty urgent. You should keep track of delegated tasks by e-mail, telephone or within a meeting to check back on their progress later.

An example of a delegated task could be somebody calling you to ask for an urgent favor or request that you step into a meeting. You could delegate this responsibility by suggesting a better person for the job or by giving the caller the necessary information to have him deal with the matter himself.

The fourth and last quadrant is called *Don’t Do* because it is there to help you sort out things you should not being doing at all.

Discover and stop bad habits, like surfing the internet without a reason or gaming too long, these give you an excuse for not being able to deal with important tasks in the 1st and 2nd quadrant.

1. Putting things to-do on a list frees your mind. But always question what is worth doing first.
2. Try limiting yourself to no more than eight tasks per quadrant. Before adding another one, complete the most important one first. Remember: It is not about collecting but finishing tasks.
3. You should always maintain only one list for both business and private tasks. That way you will never be able to complain about not having done anything for your family or yourself at the end of the day.
4. Do not let you or others distract you. Do not let others define your priority. Plan in the morning, then work on your stuff. And in the end, enjoy the feeling of completion.
5. Finally, try not to procrastinate that much. Not even by over-managing your to-dos.

For even more tips, refer to our comprehensive [introduction to time management](https://www.eisenhower.me/time-management/).

**What are you waiting for?**

Join many others and try our [apps](https://www.eisenhower.me/eisenhower-matrix-apps/) or the [free Eisenhower Matrix canvas sheet](https://www.eisenhower.me/eisenhower-matrix-canvas/) now!