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10 Simple Ways to Make Your To-Do Lists More **EFFECTIVE**

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A WORD ABOUT YOUR TO-DO LIST...

Your to-do list should be 100% useful to you in your daily routine.

At it's best, your to-do list should help you complete tasks in an organized, practical, and responsible way.

But if you find yourself cringing, wincing, and stressing out every single time you look at your daily list, then it's time to take some drastic action!

You need to shake up your old to-do list making ways and practice creating new habits that will fully support your goals and dreams.

Here are ten simple ways you can make your daily to-do lists more effective, right now.

Use one or more of these tips to clean up your daily lists for an instant productivity boost!

Rashelle Tsip

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TIP #1. START WITH THE END GOAL IN MIND

You're not making a to-do list for the sake of making a to-do list.

You're making a to-do list to help you reach your goals, dreams, and desires.

Keeping your end goal(s) at the top of your mind will help you create more structured, concise, and focused lists.

What's important to you professionally and personally?

What do you want to achieve over the next couple of days, weeks, and months?

Do your best to envision your desired goal, from the big picture, down to the smallest detail.

Once you've identified what your goal(s) are, you can break down your goal into small and manageable daily tasks.

Let's say your end goal is to keep a more tidy kitchen on a regular basis.

You could break down this large goal into smaller daily to-dos like the following:

- Wipe down kitchen table after meals
- Remove clean dishes from drainboard and store on shelf
- Scrub kitchen sink after dinner

See how easy that was?

Each of your daily to-dos should support your larger goals in some way, thereby moving closer towards your goals every single day.

TIP #2. STOP REINVENTING THE WHEEL

Want to hear some good news?

It's not necessary to recreate your to-do lists from memory or scratch every single day.

That's a constant daily exercise in frustration, wasted time, and energy!

You can make great use of yesterday's list, and previous lists, by objectively reviewing your to-dos.

What does this mean exactly?

It simply means *reviewing your to-dos as items and not judging yourself or your ability to complete said items.*

This process keeps you abreast of what's important and current on your list and ensures no errant to-dos mistakenly fall through the cracks.

Begin by reviewing yesterday's to-do list.

- Which tasks are current?
- Which tasks must be re-evaluated?
- Which tasks must be revised?
- Which tasks must be updated?

Take a moment to decide which tasks should be on today's list, and which tasks should be scheduled for another day.

You can then create your daily to-do list as needed.

TIP #3. BUILD A BETTER LIST USING YESTERDAY'S LIST

Sure, you *review* your to-do lists, but have you ever reviewed old to-do lists with the intention of creating better future lists?

Believe or not, there's a lot of valuable information sitting in your old to-dos lists.

Uncovering these gold nuggets of knowledge will help you create more efficient lists in future.

Pull out one or more of your past to-do lists.

Carefully look at the to-do list items and ask yourself some pointed questions.

- Were your old lists too ambitious or vague?
- Were tasks too complex or confusing?
- Were tasks successfully completed...or not?
- What helped or hindered you from crossing to-dos off your list?

Once you have a better idea of your past list-making habits, you can take steps to correct list items so they are short, succinct, and streamlined.

What have you learned from your past to-do lists?

What recurring themes or patterns do you see?

What steps can you take to ensure you'll create more efficient lists in future?

TIP #4. TACKLE TO-DOS EARLIER IN THE DAY

Has something like this ever happened to you?

You're ready to finally work on your to-do list, but it's already 9 P.M. at night.

You're tired, your eyes ache, and you have absolutely no desire to do your work.

The result?

Your to-dos remain unfinished for the day.

If you find it difficult to complete to-dos later in the day, then you should try working on your to-dos at an earlier time.

You might decide to work on items first thing in the morning after having breakfast, when you first arrive at work, sometime mid-morning, or perhaps right after lunch.

Try experimenting with any combination of these time slots.

Now, the point here isn't to lock you into a particular timeframe forever and ever.

Rather, it's to give yourself the best chance of completing to-dos during the day when you're still feeling awake, refreshed, and energized.

When would be a good time or time(s) for you to tackle your to-dos?

Even if you only complete a couple of tasks earlier in the day, you'll still have accomplished two more tasks than you would have normally completed.

TIP #5. KEEP CURRENT AND FUTURE TO-DOS SEPARATE

Constantly confusing yourself with a huge collection of to-dos, present and future, sitting on your daily list?

While your to-dos are important, you don't have to have them in full view all the time!

Separating your to-dos into distinct time frames can make them more manageable and keep your mind focused on what's important, right here, right now.

Get in the habit of entering or writing down current to-dos in your daily planner or calendar.

This small practice will help you better understand what must be accomplished today, versus what must be accomplished tomorrow.

And what about those future to-dos?

Don't worry, you'll still be capturing these to-dos!

Move future to-dos to separate lists based on the seasons, holidays, quarters of the year, or any method you so choose, in order to prevent constant daily confusion and chaos.

Lastly, don't forget to review your future to-dos on a regular basis so you know what's coming down the pike and you don't miss a thing.

TIP #6. CREATE TO-DO LISTS FOR SPECIFIC PROJECTS

An easy way to make your to-do lists more effective is to create specific lists for projects or assignments.

Sounds intriguing, doesn't it?

Here's how the process works...

Rather than maintaining a giant to-do list that houses every single to-do you need to accomplish over the next several months (which can be incredibly overwhelming, by the way!), you'll create smaller, more manageable lists unique to your individual projects.

This process allows you better focus on your project and your daily to-do list because you're not constantly sifting through tens and tens of to-dos on a regular basis.

Give it a shot: the next time you find yourself working on a contained project at work or home, try creating a project-specific to-do list.

Do your best to stay focused on creating this unique list of to-dos.

Remember you're not making a list of *all* your to-dos, just the ones that are related to this individual project.

When you're finished, you can pluck out a unique to-do from your project list, and add it to your daily to-do list as needed.

You'll be simultaneously keeping your eye on the big picture, while completing your daily work.

TIP #7. ENSURE TO-DOS CAN BE COMPLETED IN A SINGLE SESSION

Are you inadvertently creating to-do lists that even a superhero couldn't complete in a single day?

Reduce unnecessary overwhelm and stress in your life by breaking your to-dos into smaller tasks.

These tasks should be tasks that you can physically accomplish in a single session or sitting.

Why break tasks into even smaller chunks?

Well, this simple method ensures you won't get frustrated or discouraged while you work.

Writing a 50-page report is a large project, but if you chunk down the steps into brainstorming ideas, conducting research, outlining the paper, and writing drafts, then the process becomes much more manageable.

Just imagine what you could accomplish and how you would feel if you could check off multiple to-dos from your list on a daily basis!

Take a good hard look at your current to-do list.

Which of your tasks are realistic?

Which of your tasks are unrealistic?

Which of your to-dos needs to be broken down into smaller or more clearly-defined steps?

TIP #8. KEEP YOUR LISTS IN THE SAME LOCATION

Making to-do lists on sticky notes, scraps of paper, and different notebooks may be useful for getting ideas and thoughts out of your head.

But this list-making process can also sabotage your ability to get things done in the long run!

Having multiple lists is not only difficult to manage, but it can also be downright confusing.

You may end up inadvertently duplicating, deleting, removing, misplacing, or ignoring otherwise important tasks.

And spending hours reviewing and revising your carefully created to-dos is something you definitely don't want to make a habit of!

Keep your lists organized for easy access by storing them in a single location in your home or office.

You'll know exactly where to find your list(s) each and every time you need them.

You can use a notebook, notepad, planner, calendar, digital app, smart phone, tablet, laptop, desktop, or the cloud to store your lists.

Try keeping your list on your desk, in a drawer, on a bulletin board, or other centralized location.

This same principle applies to smaller project lists.

Practice storing project lists in the same general location or area so you can quickly and easily reference tasks.

TIP #9. DECLUTTER YOUR TO-DO LISTS.

To-do lists should be filled with tasks you're actually going to accomplish over the next several days.

What *shouldn't* they be filled with?

Well, for starters, they shouldn't be filled with long-lost goals, postponed dreams, abandoned ideas, or unsuccessful accomplishments.

Remember, you're creating a *to-do* list.

If you haven't decluttered your to-do lists in some time, then you should definitely take a moment out of your busy day to do so.

Consider eliminating non-urgent, expired, or irrelevant to-dos that have been sitting on your list for the past few weeks or months.

Which of your to-dos need to be removed?

Which of your to-dos are you going to let go of right now?

Yes, you may need to make some difficult decisions that you haven't made in some time.

But trust me, your hard work will yield results that will be well worth the effort!

TIP #10. GET IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT

Quick question: do you control your to-do list, or does your to-do list control you?

Your to-do lists shouldn't dictate every single move you make in life.

You shouldn't let your to-do lists derail your well-laid weekend family plans.

You shouldn't let your to-do lists be a complete dealbreaker in your professional commitments.

Nor should your lists stress you out, cause you upset, or make your stomach turn upside down with anxiety and worry.

A to-do list is simply a list of tasks that you need to complete!

Period, end of story!

You don't have to let your to-do lists hold you hostage or overrun your life.

Remember, *you're* in the driver's seat.

You get to decide what's on your lists...and what isn't.

You can *always* add, remove, edit, modify, or delete items as necessary.

How are you going to get back in the driver's seat when it comes to your to-do lists?

Don't be afraid to take back your power and edit your to-do lists on a regular basis to suit your needs.

Which of the above strategies are you going to use to make your to-do lists more effective? Why? Write your answers below.

HAVE TOO MANY TO-DOS? LEARN HOW TO TRIM YOUR LIST!



An online course that will teach you how to identify your top to-dos, plan tasks for the future, and confidently cross items off your list while feeling great!

- ✓ **Know exactly which tasks you are going to work on** today, tomorrow, and future
- ✓ **Have a streamlined list** that makes it super-easy to see what needs to be done...without carrying around dead-weight tasks
- ✓ **Stop worrying about trying to remember an important task** that needs to be completed in six weeks' time
- ✓ **Work on urgent tasks with your full attention and focus...** without feeling like other tasks are being ignored or mindlessly lost through the cracks
- ✓ **Create your to-do lists with confidence and clarity** so you can get things done and feel absolutely great!

GET THE COURSE NOW FOR ONLY \$97!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Rashelle Isip is a New York City-based professional organizer and productivity consultant who helps people get organized so they can stress less, have more fun, and be happier at home and work.

Her work has been featured in a wide variety of print and online media including Good Housekeeping, Better Homes and Gardens, Fast Company, NBC News, Cosmopolitan, Apartment Therapy, Business Insider, The Washington Post, Huffington Post UK, and The Atlantic.

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