

DOING MORE WITH LESS

Five Skills to Manage an Increased Workload





“Anything that causes you to overreact or underreact can control you, and often does.”

**DAVID ALLEN, AUTHOR,
GETTING THINGS DONE**

When Life Changes

For many of us, the events of recent weeks and months represent the greatest widescale change we’ve experienced in our lifetimes. People everywhere have had to change how they socialize, communicate, and live.

But perhaps nowhere has the change been so great than in the workplace. Some have been sent home to work, others called into the field. Many have had to change how they work, and many have taken on new work. Regardless, whether you’re now working double time, working remotely, or remotely working, your routines have likely been disrupted. And with layoffs happening across industries and organizations, many now find themselves taking on more work to help their companies survive. They also find themselves stressed, overwhelmed, and unsure of how to manage the additional workload.

In this guide, we outline five skills for regaining composure and control.



Getting Things Done.

SURMOUNTING STRESS

In June, 2020, we asked 1,292 professionals to tell us whether and how they've been impacted by organizational changes brought on by the ongoing pandemic.

It turns out that nearly 3 of 5 people (58.6 percent) have experienced either a workforce reduction or a company restructure that changed the dynamic and size of their team. Yet 82 percent of those working with different or downsized teams say their workload hasn't been reduced accordingly. As a result, many are taking on more work, experiencing greater stress, and feeling less focused and effective.

The Top Five Consequences people have experienced following team changes include:

01



Taking on more work

02



Working Longer Hours

03



Losing energy and engagement

04



Losing sight of work priorities

05



Neglecting important work for urgent but unimportant tasks

People also appear to lack key productivity skills that can help them manage their increased workload.



Of those surveyed, people struggle most to:

SAY “NO” when they’ve hit their project threshold.

NEGOTIATE their workload as needed.

MANAGE urgent requests so they don’t take over their to-do list.

RENEGOTIATE commitments and expectations with their manager.

TAKE TIME each week to review and plan.

We know from past research that people who adhere to just a few productivity skills are far more likely to finish projects, not let tasks and projects fall through the cracks, and feel less stressed. In the words of David Allen, author of the *New York Times* bestseller *Getting Things Done*, “Much of the stress that people feel doesn’t come from having too much to do. It comes from not finishing what they’ve started.” The challenges of changing work are less about how much one has to do and more about how one responds to it. Below you’ll find five productivity tips that can help you do more with less time and resources.

*“You must use
your mind to
get things off
your mind.”*

DAVID ALLEN, AUTHOR,
GETTING THINGS DONE

Capture What Has Your Attention

To regain control of your workload, you must first get a clear picture of everything on your plate. Capture all commitments, tasks, ideas, and projects in an external place rather than keeping them in your head. You can't prioritize tasks or renegotiate deadlines you cannot see. Don't allow all of your commitments to sit in your head as an overwhelming weight.



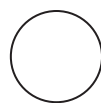
Audit Your Commitments

Once you've listed all your tasks and commitments, decide which you will do, which you'll decline, and which you'll renegotiate. If there's no way you can do them all, be realistic about what you can and will do. Have the courage to renegotiate timelines or expectations with those relying on you. As you navigate these conversations, make it clear you're a contributor craving focus, not a complainer craving less.

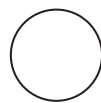


“Things rarely get stuck because of lack of time. They get stuck because the doing of them has not been defined.”

DAVID ALLEN, AUTHOR, *GETTING THINGS DONE*



DO



DECLINE



RENEGOTIATE

“YOU DEFINE THE CONTOURS OF YOUR CHARACTER

*and the shape of your life by what you say “no”
to. A sculptor creates a masterpiece from stone
by subtracting the pieces that don’t belong.”*

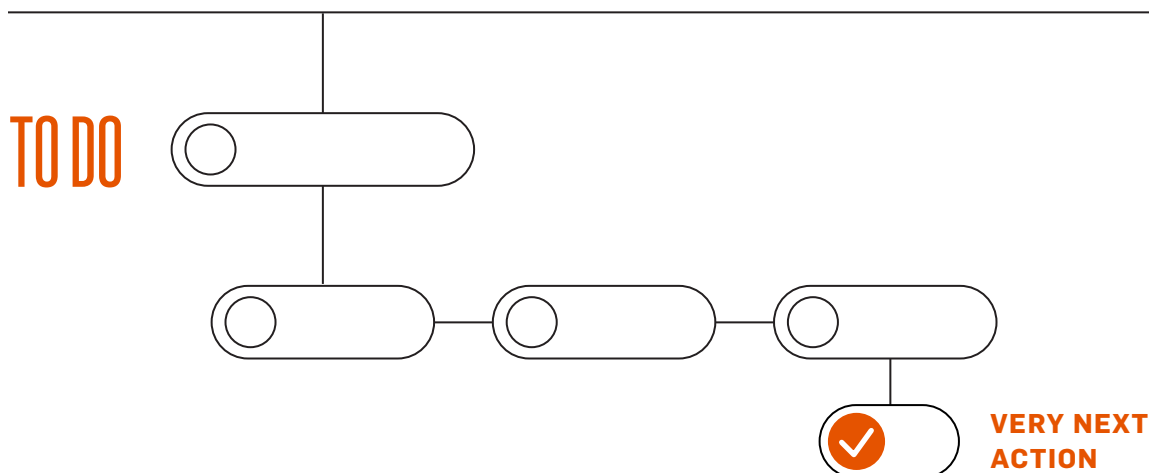
JOSEPH GRENNY, COAUTHOR, *CRUCIAL CONVERSATIONS*





Break Down Your To-Dos

Most people feel overwhelmed by their lists because they're filled with vague things like "Budget" or "Tradeshow Event." Undefined to-dos repel us rather than motivate us to act. You can't actually do a project; you can only take small actions that lead to a larger outcome. So clarify your tasks by breaking them down to the very next action. Often you can overcome procrastination by shrinking the task until it's easy to do.



04-



Reflect Before You Do

Before you open your noisy email inbox or voice mailbox, take a few minutes to review your calendar and to-do lists. Get clear on the important work you want to accomplish before exposing yourself to the urgent matters that inevitably arise.

Taking a few minutes to reflect ensures you make better decisions about how to spend your time. Then prioritize tasks based on what you know is important instead of reacting to what's latest or loudest.

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Review Weekly

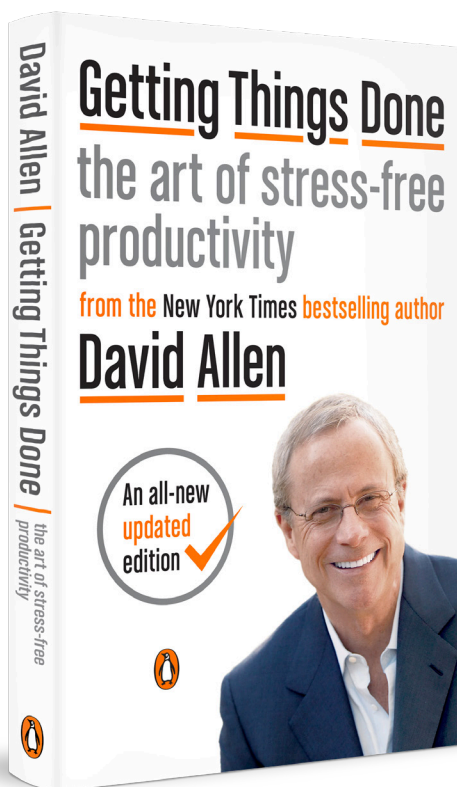
Keep a sacred, non-negotiable meeting with yourself every week to re-sync, get current, and align your daily work and projects with your highest priorities.



CONCLUSION

Changes that impact workload are inevitable. We're experiencing a change now, and we'll experience changes in the future. What people really need to succeed in the face of change are change-resistant habits that serve them well. Grit and gumption go far, but they go further when combined with proven productivity skills.





Getting Things Done®

The skills outlined above hail from Getting Things Done® (GTD®) is evolved from the original work of David Allen. Combining decades of David's research with Crucial Learning's powerful and proven instructional design, Getting Things Done brings practical productivity skills to life for the modern learner—yielding improved individual effectiveness, project efficiency, meaningful productivity, team innovation, and relationships.

Get Started

To bring the Getting Things Done skills to your organization for increased productivity and engagement, contact us to learn more.

Call **1-800-449-5989** or visit us at **CrucialLearning.com**.





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