

How to Use a To-Do List to Control Your Time

Good time management is simply managing the events and activities of your day. If you feel like your days are getting away from you, you are not alone. Advances in technology have brought more information rushing toward us than ever before. Ten years ago, we used telephones, fax machines, and letters to share information. Now we have emails, video phones, pod casts, and a continually evolving workplace. Managing our information has become the focus of the majority of our time.

A good time management system will help you organize your information and help you track the important events of your life. It will also work as a tracking system for what happened on a certain day, so you can easily refer back to it if needed.

A simple calendar works as a scheduler. You can record any future appointments and commitments. You can mark down significant dates so you will always remember birthdays and anniversaries. You can also record future deadlines so they are never missed. It is a good idea to record the deadline about three days before the actual date to give you a cushion.

Your daily to-do list is a catch all for all those tasks that you need to complete, but you haven't set an actual date for. When you look over your to-do list, you can assess the tasks in order of priority. When does the task need to be finished? How much time will it take to finish? How big of a priority is it? When do you plan to finish it?

When estimating the length of time to complete a task, you should allow yourself 50% more time than you think it will take to finish. This will keep your day on schedule, and you might even find you have some spare time throughout the day.

Another great use for your to-do list is as a catch all for all the pieces of information that accumulates on small pieces of paper in your pockets. How often do you empty your pockets at the end of the day to find ten or fifteen scraps of paper with phone numbers, names and dates on them? You can use your daily to-do list to record all this information at the time, and then move it to the appropriate place from there.

Here are six advantages to using a daily to-do list:

1. A to-do list helps you keep track of what needs to be done.
2. A to-do list is more dependable than your memory is.
3. You can prioritize items on the list.
4. You can easily see overlapping activities. This will save you time by grouping activities that occur in the same place, or use the same resources.
5. You will get a great feeling of accomplishment when you cross something off your list.
6. You can carry over any uncompleted tasks to the next day, without risk of forgetting them.

Using a to-do list will help you focus on what you can realistically expect to accomplish in a day. It will help you spend your valuable time on what is really important, and help you reach your goals much faster.

Source: <http://www.articlecircle.com>

About the Author

Gerri Stone publishes articles and free time management tips at <http://www.tipsfortimemanagement.com>