

Working Through Your To-Do List: What is the Right Order?

Productivity can often be measured in how quickly you're able to work through your to-do list. When you have a large number of things to do, productivity means crossing those items off quickly and efficiently so that you can go home early having completed your entire day's work.

And if you can do *that*, then you can go to work less stressed tomorrow and make yourself a more likely candidate for a raise. So it's a pretty useful skill.

But your ability to work through a to-do list is not just about your productivity or your typing speed. Just as important is your ability to approach your to-do list in the right way and in the right order. This can actually make *all* the difference, so read on to find out what that perfect order is.

Big or Small Jobs First?

The first question you might ask yourself is whether you should complete the big jobs or the small jobs on your to-do list first.

The answer is: 'it depends'.

While completing smaller jobs first might seem like a good way to clear yourself up for the rest of the day so you can focus on your most important and lengthy projects, it also means that you're likely to use up some of your energy and your productivity before you've made a start on the job that will be the most valuable and rewarding.

Instead then, it often makes sense to work through your massive project while you still have plenty of energy and drive and then only to start on the smaller ones once you've finished those. This way you can do things like answering e-mails at the end of the day when you're low on energy and focus.

There is an exception though – and that is anything that is causing you stress. Any small task that is causing you stress (making a call you don't want to make) can be considered an 'open loop'. These are tasks that will distract you while you do your bigger workload and as such it is often pertinent to do those ones *first*.

Good or Bad Tasks First?

The other question is whether or not you should do the better tasks first or the worse tasks. In other words, do you start or end with what you enjoy? The answer might surprise you.

Actually you see, starting your day with the tasks you enjoy often makes the most sense. The reason for this is that it is easiest to do jobs that you enjoy doing. As the first job is often the hardest to motivate yourself to do, putting the task you *like* doing first is a smart trick that can prevent you from procrastinating early on!