

Managing a To-Do List Study Guide

How to Use This Study Guide

The Study Guide for this course is designed to help you take notes as you're taking the online course "Managing a To-Do List." It is organized in sections that mirror the elements of the course, with plenty of room to make notes and capture your learning.

The use of the Study Guide is optional. Research shows that different people learn differently, and for many, the act of writing something down as you are learning helps to solidify the information in your brain. If you find the Study Guide helpful, use it. If not, feel free to omit it from your learning process.

Course Overview – Managing a To-Do List

Creating a to-do list is a practice that is probably as old as writing itself. The word "agenda" comes from Latin and literally means "things to be done." The Book of Genesis begins with a to-do list of the work of each day of creation. On the first day, a Monday, it is said that God created light. Each day had its task: firmaments on Tuesday, land and trees on Wednesday, and so on till the seventh day when God scheduled a well-earned rest.

Most of us don't have such ambitious plans for a single week, but we all have plenty to do! For many people, a to-do list is the most basic planning tool, and sometimes the only one. The question is, are we really getting the most out of it? Whether your list is scribbled on the back of an envelope or curated in a sophisticated app, there are a variety of techniques you can adopt to customize your list to your needs.

In this course, we'll discuss the reasons for making a to-do list and how list-making actually aids memory and relieves stress. Next, we'll consider how to-do lists can fail and what we can do to make better lists that is more relevant to our needs. We'll look at the habits of some famous list makers like Benjamin Franklin, and what we can learn from them. We will learn how to turn a to-do list into more of an actual plan by adding our tasks to a calendar and even scheduling breaks. Finally, we'll learn about the advantages of a shared to-do list for keeping you and your team members on track.

Learning Objectives – Managing a To-Do List

By the end of this course, you will understand the following:

- Discuss reasons for making a to-do list
- Recognize ways that to-do lists fail
- Identify methods for improving a to-do list
- Identify to-do list techniques used by high achieving individuals
- Describe the benefits of scheduling tasks on a calendar
- Examine the benefits of scheduling work breaks
- Recognize the benefits of shared to-do lists

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Why Make a To-Do List?

The main reason to make a to-do list is to help you _____ what needs to be done.

The Zeigarnik Effect

How To-Do Lists Fail?

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Building a Better To-Do List

#	Tip	Notes
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		

The 1-3-5 Rule

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Lessons from Famous List-Makers

Benjamin Franklin

Leonardo da Vinci

Thomas Edison

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From To-Do List to Calendar

#	4 Ways to Handle Leftover Tasks
1	
2	
3	
4	

Using Your Calendar to Manage Interruptions

The Break List-Planning Your Breaks

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What Should I Do?

Gamification

Shared To-Do Lists

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Create It, Write It, and Discuss It

Discussion Questions

Discussion questions are used by workgroups who are taking courses concurrently and want to engage in conversations about the course content. The use of discussion questions is optional.

1. The Zeigarnik effect states that people are better at remembering incomplete tasks than completed tasks. Is this true for you? How do you feel when you have important tasks that are yet to be completed?
2. Parkinson's law states, "Work expands so as to fill the time available for its completion." Have you found this to be true? Do you feel you do your best work when you have plenty of time to prepare or when you are facing a tight deadline? Discuss ways that using a to-do list can help you stay on track.
3. Do you keep separate to-do lists for work and personal tasks or combine everything into one list? What are the advantages and disadvantages of each approach?
4. What are the most common reasons you sometimes fail to finish your to-do list? Are you putting the wrong things on the list, biting off more than you can chew, spending too much time on less important matters, losing time to distractions, or being hindered by other people's inability to get things done?
5. Do you keep a "break list"? What's on it? Think about the things you do (or would like to do) when you need five minutes, 15 minutes, or longer to clear your head.