

# Managing Your Time

## Using a

## DAILY THINGS



## TO DO LIST

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### Why do I need to use a things-to-do list?

A things-to-do list is a simple memory device that will help you to remember and keep track of the numerous day-to-day (academic, personal, social, family, work, etc.) tasks that you need or want to complete. By writing down what you need or want to do, you can focus your attention on completing tasks rather than worrying about trying to remember them.

A things-to-do list has many more uses. (1) You can create specialized things-to-do lists to break down a larger, more difficult task (e.g., writing a research paper) into smaller, more manageable ones (e.g., each of the steps in writing a research paper); (2) You can write down in one place library references, telephone numbers, postal addresses, e-mail addresses, and any other important information; (3) You can tear out a page from your tablet to give another person information; (4) You can write down your thoughts and feelings when you are having difficulty concentrating because of an emotional or distressful situation. Writing about what you are thinking and feeling, much like talking about it, may help you to “get out” your thoughts and feelings allowing you to feel better and more able to concentrate; and (5) You can write down those “brilliant” ideas or solutions whenever you have them.

### What do I use for a things-to-do list?



A 3” X 5” tablet along with a pen is a convenient and practical way to do this since the tablet and pen can fit easily into your pocket, purse, or backpack and be readily available when you need to write down or check something on your list.

### How do I start my things-to-do list?

First, **write down the date** you start to create your list (e.g., Monday, October 10 or Mon, Oct 10). You could do this regularly in the morning and/or at night, and when you think of a task you need or want to do.

Second, **number and write down each task** that you need or want to do in no particular order at this point. You can use your things-to-do list in conjunction with your quarterly and weekly schedules to identify tasks. Use short, abbreviated sentences that start with an action verb (e.g., buy, call, write, study, go, see, read, etc.). Be as specific and detailed as necessary. For example, if you need to “call dentist,” write down the telephone number also.

Third, **write down a “Do by” date**, if necessary to know the exact date when something needs to be completed.



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Suggestion: Highlight the item or draw a star at the top or bottom of the page to allow you to easily find again important information that you may want to keep and transfer from an “old” to a “new” tablet.

Suggestion: To make use of both sides of a page, open up the tablet so that you see two pages to write on. This way, when you open the tablet, you will see two pages of tasks and information.

Suggestion: Use a paperclip to help you easily find your place in the tablet.

Fourth, **prioritize your tasks** with the letters A, B, and C to identify the order of what needs to be done. An “A” task is **urgent** and requires your immediate attention and action generally because of the task’s value or significance or the consequences of not completing the task. A “B” task is **important** and needs your attention and action, but not necessarily immediately—you have more time available to complete the task. A “C” task is **non-urgent and non-important** and does not require your immediate attention or action. The “C” priority means the task may be of less value or significance or of no great consequence if not completed or that, at the moment, you have plenty of time to complete the task. Remember, however, “C” tasks could possibly become “B” or “A” tasks in the future. “Need to do” tasks might be prioritized higher than “want to do” tasks.

Fifth, **cross out each task as you complete it**. Looking at the crossed out tasks will show what you have accomplished and motivate you to continue to use a things-to-do list.

For tasks that are not completed and crossed out that day, you have a couple of choices. You can re-write them on a new page for the next day (which takes extra time and effort) or just plan to look back a day or two to see what still needs to be done. After a couple of days, you may want to re-write them on a new page for the current or next day to keep them fresh in your mind.



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Make Your Own  
**DAILY THINGS TO DO LIST**

DATE: Mon, Oct 10

Priority	Do By
<del>A 1. Buy 3X5 tablet</del>	<del>M Oct 10</del>
A 2. Start things to do list	Tu Oct 11

(1) Write date.

(2) Number and write down each task.

(4) Prioritize tasks as A, B, or C

(3) Write down a due date

(5) Cross out each task as completed.

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