

**From:** Erin Hoffman [mailto:erin@optimumproductivity.com]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 24, 2010 8:35 AM  
**To:** johndoe@acompany.com  
**Subject:** Task list advice for the chronically busy -- in 5 minutes or less!



## Quick Tips

### Task List Advice for the Chronically Busy (in 5 Minutes or Less)

Hi John,

I am often in awe of how many tasks my clients process on any given day. It is so important that busy people have (and use) a good task management system. Without one, things will start to fall through the cracks. Here are a few quick tips that will help the busiest of the busy.

#### 1. Quick, easy and painless

Your system must be easy to use, quick to input, and easily sync from work to mobile. If it's complicated, you won't use it (period). If your current system is not easy to use, change it (or get someone to help you). There are many great options out there. Don't suffer with a system that does not work.

#### 2. No one is "too busy" to keep a task list

There is a limit to how many items you can keep in your head at once. The busier you are the more you need a trusted system to capture everything. You should be using your task manager for everything from "important client proposal" to "buy toilet paper". Believe it or not, once you get everything into a system your brain will relax and stop reminding you every 5 minutes of the things you have to do. Ahhhh

#### 3. Keep categories simple

Don't get fancy and create dozens of categories. The human brain can only process 7 things at a time. Give your tasks general categories (also known as contexts). How would you like to see your tasks separated? For example: work vs. personal or calls vs. at computer. Categories are there to help you batch similar tasks together, thus being more efficient.

#### 4. Foolproof follow-up

There is always a fear that if you delegate something it may not get done. You need to have a foolproof system in place for follow-up. When you delegate something, instantly make a task that will remind you to follow-up on a specified day. Many programs, Outlook for example, have special features for delegation and follow-up.

#### 5. Clean up your primary view

If you are looking at a jumbled mess your brain will get overwhelmed causing you to avoid looking at your task list all together. Give your brain a break. Keep your primary view clean and clear. Most software can be customized to make the view less busy and more pleasing to look at. Move finished items out of your primary view. This will give you a feeling of greater control over your day.

I'm always available to consult with you about finding the best task management system and customizing it to fit your needs. Feel free to send me an [email](mailto:erin@optimumproductivity.com), or call me at (805) 602-2096.  
Until next time –

*Erin*

*Erin Hoffman is the president of Optimum Productivity. She helps busy professionals and businesses save hours of wasted time each week by showing them how to use their email and to do list effectively. Her company, Optimum Productivity, offers company training packages, speaking and individual coaching locally to San Luis Obispo and Northern Santa Barbara Counties and via the web all over the world. For more information contact Erin at [erin@optimumproductivity.com](mailto:erin@optimumproductivity.com) or call (805) 602-2096.*



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