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Be Better at Everything: How to keep to a to-do list

This issue is full of lists, so why not offer some tips on how to actually keep to your to-do lists? Pam N. Woods, a certified professional organizer (seriously, that's her title) offered a list (yep, another list) of tips to help you work through a daunting to-do list. If you want more help from Woods, go to worklifecoach.com.

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1. Listen to your instincts

Often, your gut will let you know what is most important, and help you prioritize what on your list needs to be crossed off first. (But maybe don't trust your gut if it seems to be steering you toward "finish 'Gilmore Girls' season three" when there are reports to be written.)

2. Decide what is most pressing

If a smaller, easier item on your list is almost finished, try to complete that task rather than starting on a more ambitious project. Putting off the almost-done task may jeopardize completing what could be a done deal. And you get to cross something off the list, which is always a good feeling.

3. What can you get done right now? How much time do you have?

Do you have everything you need to accomplish your goals? If you don't, figuring out what is available will help determine your next move. And do you have five or 10 minutes only? An hour? All day? Deciding how much time you have to spend on this list will help you figure out the most likely item to tackle next.

4. Take advantage of your energy level.

You probably feel dragged down and defeated at the end of your day. Use that time to do more mindless, mundane tasks and save your bigger goals for when you're fresh-faced and fully charged (normally in the morning).

5. Make an appointment for your own time

Don't let yourself get roped into helping your brother move a couch at 7 a.m. if you work better in the morning. Determine when you're most productive and commit to working on YOUR project then. If you can keep your other appointments, you can keep this one. Add it to your calendar.