

Become a List Maker

With unlimited resources for journals, planners, day timers, personal management systems, and office supplies it's still surprising how many of us still are not writing things down.

The best way to have a clear focus and establish your goals is to write them down. A person who consistently gets more done has the ability to clearly identify goals and objectives ... even if these goals are just for a day.

A valuable tool for helping you clarify your tasks is a 'list'. Whether it's a master list, a daily to-do list or a five-year plan, keep all of your tasks together in one place so you can review them on a regular basis. Trying to keep all the day-to-day activities crammed inside your craniums will result in feeling overwhelmed, forgetful and counterproductive.

Do you want more clarity? Do you want to stop procrastinating? Are you ready to be more productive? Then become a list maker. And, here are seven quick tips to help you get start today:

1. Do your thinking on paper. Write it down!
2. Write about what you **want**, NOT about what you **don't want**.
3. Prioritize your items and set realistic deadlines for accomplishing them.
4. Get busy on your action items.
5. Once you get moving, keep moving and don't stop.
6. Do something every day that moves you closer to the goals on your list.
7. Review and update your lists daily (or regularly).

So, what type of list should you use? Read through the following descriptions to help determine your which list suits you best.

Master list – Write everything you can think of on your master list. This list is your 'catchall' list of present and future ideas, goals, and tasks. The master list is not a place for sorting and prioritizing. It is simply a list that holds all of your ideas, tasks, and responsibilities so you don't have to keep them all in your head.

Monthly list – For those who like to plan ahead for the month, this is the ideal list. Transfer any items on your master list that may apply for the month ahead, but are not due immediately. This will help in long-term planning and prioritizing.

Weekly list – If planning a month ahead of time seems a bit overwhelming, plan a week in advance instead. Sunday evening is a good time to sit down and plan out your week—transferring those items from your master list.

Daily list – We all have things to do on a day-to-day basis. Remember to write them down on your daily list so as not to forget them; and check them off as you accomplish each task.



Writing out your goals and activities has a wonderful effect on your thinking.

Depending on your work style, you may use only one specific list or a combination of all of these. There should be no pressure to utilize all of these lists. The idea is to work more effectively and to get more done. If you have to maintain more lists than you're able to, then you've just created more work for yourself. Use only what works best and stick with it.

First of all it clears your mind of the clutter. Secondly, it stimulates creativity, which in turn releases the energy required for you to take action. This one critical activity—making lists and writing out your goals—not only works to combat procrastination, but it will become a great catalyst for you to become more productive and get more done.

So, what are you waiting for? Start making those lists!



Article: A101. – Become a List Maker
Category: Time Management/Organization



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Donna M. Murphy is an editorial specialist, a veteran writer and a published author who has written, edited, and designed extensive collateral and key solutions products for print and the web. Training manuals, operating procedures, business documents and content quality assurance encompass a large portion of her assignments. Donna is the creative force behind Summit Publication Design, LLC, and has specialized in content organization, quality assurance and publication design since 1997. Visit Donna's website at <http://www.summitpubdesign.com> for information on her comprehensive services, helpful resources, more articles like this one, and strategies to help you improve the quality and effectiveness of your publications.

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