

Multitasking is a Myth

In the past, I considered myself an amazing multitasker. I could talk on the phone, write an email, and scroll social media all at the same time. Many of us think we're great multitaskers but we can't handle the truth! We truly aren't! I came to that realization when I launched LivingHealthyList.com. I was doing a lot of different things, always busy but feeling like I was running in place—never moving forward or completing things in a timely manner.

Multitasking is a myth. What's really happening, say's Earl Miller Picower (professor of neuroscience at MIT), is that for the most part, we simply can't focus on more than one thing at a time. What we can do, Picower establishes, is shift our focus from one thing to the next with astonishing speed."Switching from task to task, you think you're actually paying attention to everything around you at the same time. But you're actually not," Miller said."You're not paying attention to one or two things simultaneously, but switching between them very rapidly."

The more time you spend switching between tasks, the less likely you are to get back to the original task before you were sidetracked. The more you multitask, the shorter your attention span is, and the more difficult to complete even simple tasks. You feel that you are busy, maybe too busy, but you're not productive.

Do you often say to yourself, hmm, where was I? How much time are you wasting switching from one thing to another? Multitasking makes you less efficient! According to an article written by Doug Wick, President of Positioning Systems (a corporate Business Coaching firm), by putting an end to multitasking, you can increase your productivity by 28%! That means you can get 28 % more done or get what you need to do 28 % quicker—giving you more time to do things you enjoy!

Here's an example of how multitasking and interruptions disrupt your productivity whether at work or at home. Let's just say that you're at work and in the midst of writing an article. Your phone rings and you stop what you're doing to answer it. You talk to the caller, and figure out what they need, maybe you have to send them something via email. You hang up, find whatever it is you need to email them. Just as you are about to get back to what you were originally doing a co-worker walks in and asks you a question. Did you know that up to a third of your day can be spent just reorienting yourself back to that first task – the one thing of which you likely said, "I need to get this one thing done today." The One Thing is a great concept and best-selling book by Gary Keller.

“Look... a bunny!” When you are multitasking, you are easily distracted by just about everything. Over time you have more trouble filtering out irrelevant information. It takes 2-15 minutes of recovery time to reorient your mind to the task you were originally performing. The cost of constant fragmenting and diversion of your attention is simple. It wastes your time, energy, and money.

Multitasking (aka trying to perform more than one task at a time) is detrimental to your productivity and satisfaction. Instead, focus on one task at a time. In the next section, I'll show you a great way to plan your calendar accordingly. When you are organized and have your time planned, you will not waste time reorienting. I bet you will find that multitasking is just a waste of your time.

Here is a fun video from BBC Ideas that shows you what multitasking does to your brain.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tMiyzuO1qMs>

