

Episode 65: Time Management

On this episode: Dr. Jed Wolpaw

Dr. Wolpaw gives his tips and tricks for being as efficient as possible with your time management so that you can maximize your success with your work and your life in general. Have a wonderful holiday and start to the new year!

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1) Golden Rule

- Never put off something for later what you can do right now. Tasks that can be done quickly (less than 2 minutes). Stop what you're doing and do it now.
- If you can't, then write it down. If you do the task now, you won't even have to write it down. The pending task won't weigh on you.
- **Examples:** emails, quick reminders to someone, adding a stamp.
- Emails: don't put off those quick replies! Longer ones → left in inbox.

2) Lists

- Don't trust your brain. Put those 'later' tasks on a list.
- 3 lists minimum
 - 1) Inbox
 - Should be less than 1 page
 - Shouldn't have to scroll
 - 2) Daily short-term
 - **Train brain** to look at least 3x days!
 - Wake-up: *What do I do today?*
 - Mid-day: *How am I doing?*
 - End-day: *What have I done? What do I need to do NOW vs put off until tomorrow?*
 - 3) Long-term
 - Tasks due in future

Brain training via reminders.
Set 3 alarms to check list.
Leave note where you'll want to do it, eg pillow, mirror.

- **Example:** I know I have to renew my medical license but I can't do it until 90 days before. Mark the first day you can renew on your calendar and add more reminders.
- Some assume that others will remind you of important things, such as due dates or important meetings. What if the reminder goes to spam? Be responsible for reminding yourself. Learn NOW to remember important things. Be reliable!
- **Examples:** Projects, paper draft you sent to someone.
- Remember to check back! Check at least 1x/week for this list.
- Anything in future helps to put into calendar.
- Can have many lists! Project-specific, family, etc. Don't dilute your main task lists.

3) 70% rule

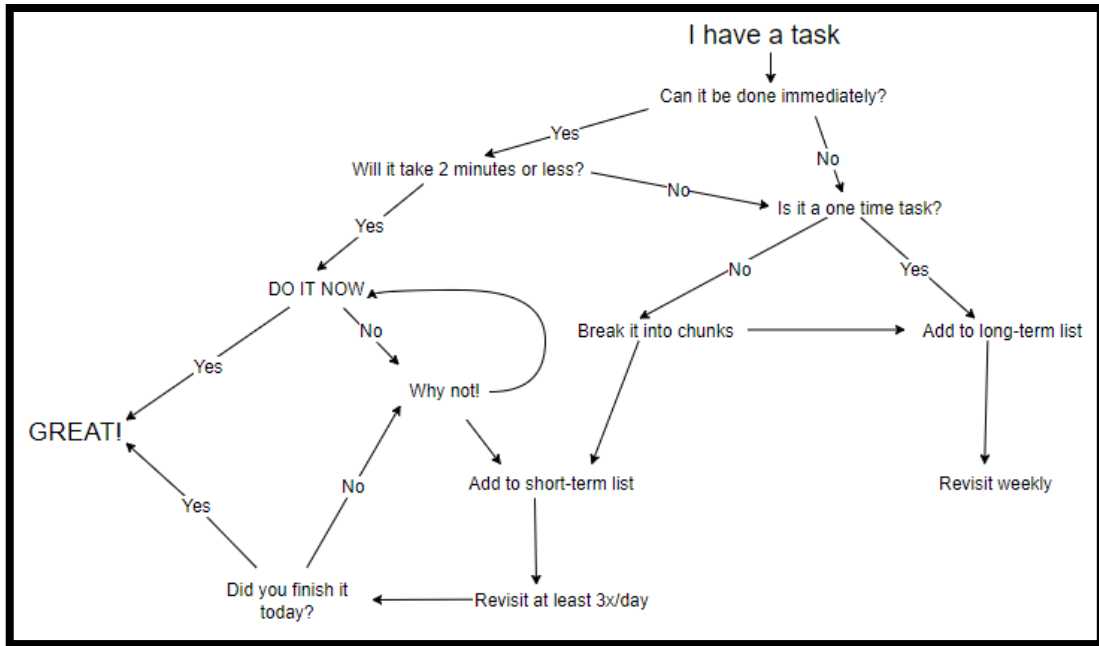
- A) **So you're planning a project but you haven't started yet...**
 - If you're 70% done planning a project, just **START!** Don't wait until 100%. This doesn't mean submitting a personal statement that is 70% complete, but like planning a new elective. Inertia to get started so don't let it overwhelm you.
 - **Eg,** for a personal statement, just start writing even though you might not fully comprehend where it's going (yet).
- B) **So you have an overwhelming project and you keep putting it off...**
 - **JUST START!** Put overwhelming feeling aside. Just start! Then you'll have done some and it all feels less daunting. Do it in chunks. Give yourself at least 20-30 minute of uninterrupted time. Brain gets more efficient so disrupting this will make work inefficient. Then give self a break for those interruptions.
 - If multiple steps, start the next step when ending your current step. Having started one, it will ease you in the next time. Prep the next step of the task.
 - **Eg,** when writing a paper in chunks, put something down for your next part.

4) Consider thinking while moving

- Dr. Wolpaw gets his best writing done while out on a run. Try doing it while exercising! If you're having a hard time with something, try exercising. Bounce it off other people, even if you're the expert.

5) Texts

- Don't rely on text messages as a reminder. It might get buried and not easily visible, so add it to your list!



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 Notes and figure by [Brian Park](#)