

Finding Focus, Prioritizing & Estimating Tasks

1 Map Tasks and Estimate Time for Greater Clarity and Accuracy

Thinking about a task in more concrete, specific terms makes it feel like it should be completed sooner and thus reduces procrastination.

How to Map Tasks (use the blank Weekly Task Mapping Tool):

1. List all your tasks for the week
2. Assign a category to each task – What category is it in? What strategic priority or operational priority is it linked to?
3. Break down tasks into steps
4. Estimate total time
5. Track total time spent

2 Prioritize Your Tasks

Prioritizing your tasks according to their importance and urgency ensures you are working on the tasks that will lead to the achievement of your personal and professional goals.

How to Prioritize Tasks:

1. Plot all tasks from step 1 on the Eisenhower Matrix.
2. Start with urgent & important (quadrant I) and number each task in this box in priority order.
3. Move to important & not urgent (quadrant II) and number each task following on from the last number in the urgent and important box.
4. Ignore tasks in quadrant III & IV unless they involve another person – if so, determine whether this task is truly something you should be doing.
5. Write the priority number for each task in quadrant I & II on your weekly time map.

3 Create Accountability for Every Task

Building accountability into each task will help you meet personal and professional goals. It will also show others that you are willing to "walk the walk not just talk the talk" and that you uphold your own commitments.

How to Create Accountability:

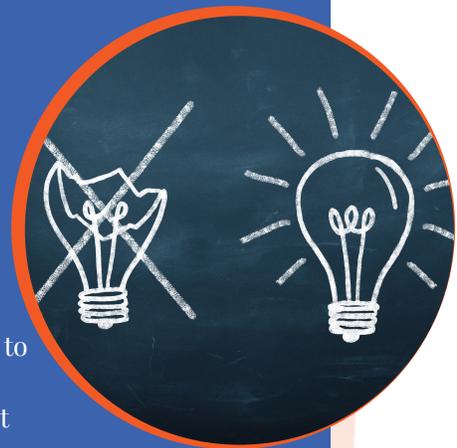
1. Share your task map with others – find a person or group where you can create accountability on your tasks.
2. Post your Map – Keeping a visual representation of your map makes it publicly known what you have to do so you feel more responsible.

4 Link Tasks to Positive and Negative Outcomes

Know “What’s in it for me (and my team and clients) if I do it?” and “What will happen for me (my team and my clients) if I don’t?” Considering the benefits and consequences will motivate us to perform actions that are internally motivated and linked to positive benefits. For those where we aren’t internally motivated, identifying the consequence of not completing the task will help us find the resolve to get it done.

How to Link Tasks to Outcomes:

1. Brainstorm the benefits of completing the task – also consider whether there are side benefits to getting the task done? E.g. “I’ll finally stop worrying about it.”
2. Brainstorm the consequences of not completing the task – consider other people and the effect that your delay will have on them.



5 Reflect on What You Learned About Your Time Management Skills

Reflection is where learning transforms into wisdom. Spend 30 minutes at the end of each week looking at your task map. Capture any key learnings you had about your time strengths and weaknesses.



Weekly Task Mapping Tool

	Task Name	Task Category	Action Steps & Time for Each Step	Estimated Total Time	Actual Time	Task Priority
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						

Weekly Task Mapping Tool cont.

	Who Holds Accountable?	Benefit to Completing	Risk of Not Completing or Delaying?	Notes/What did I Learn?
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				

Eisenhower Matrix

