

How to Prioritize Effectively

Objectives

- Build a master to-do list without judgment.
- Apply four proven frameworks to rank tasks.
- Turn priorities into clear, doable actions.
- Use reflection + renegotiation to stay on track.

Quick start: Do the 3–5-minute Brain Dump → pick one framework below → plan this week → reflect daily.

1) Brain Dump (3–5 min)

Write everything competing for your attention next week (academic, work, personal, and well-being). Don't sort—just list.

Starter prompts

- Deadlines, exams, labs, readings
- Emails, forms, applications, meetings
- Life admin (food, laundry, bills)
- Health & fitness, faith/community, family/friends

Add items to your list below:

1.	9.
2.	10.
3.	11.
4.	12.
5.	13.
6.	14.
7.	15.
8.	16.

2) Choose ONE Framework to Prioritize

Pick the model that best matches your week. You can mix and match—just start with one.

A) Eisenhower Matrix (Urgent × Important)

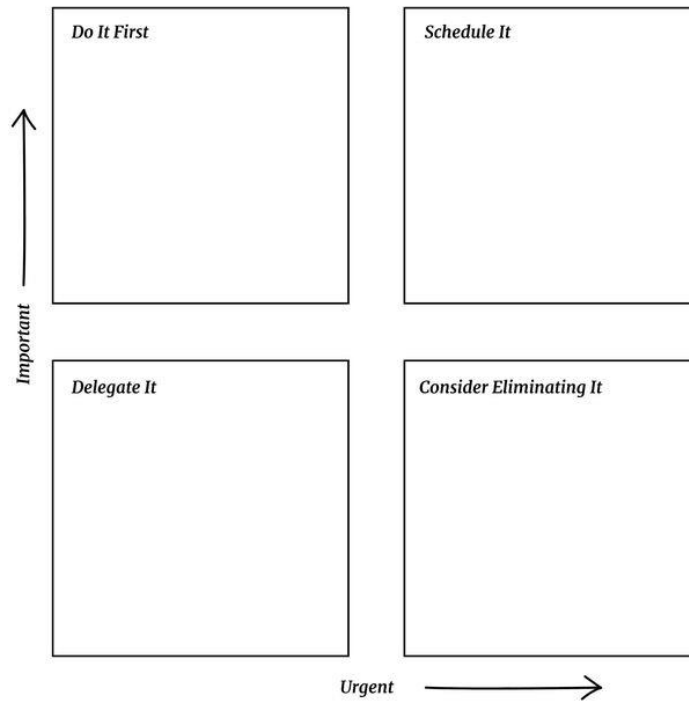
Do now: urgent + important

Schedule: not urgent + important

Delegate: urgent + not important

Eliminate/park: not urgent + not important

Try it. Fill each quadrant based on the urgency and importance of your tasks this week.



Pro tip: If everything feels urgent, ask: “What has the biggest consequence if delayed?”

B) ABCDE (Consequences First)

- A = must do today (serious consequence if missed)
- B = should do soon (moderate consequence)
- C = nice to do (no real consequence)
- D = delegate (who/what can help?)
- E = eliminate (time waster)

Try it. List tasks, label A/B/C/D/E, then order A-1, A-2, B-1...

A-1: _____

A-2: _____

B-1: _____

C-1: _____

D (delegate to / tool): _____

E (cut/park): _____

C) 1-3-5 Rule (Size Matters)

Plan your day/week with 1 big + 3 medium + 5 small tasks

1 Big: _____

3 Medium: _____

5 Small: _____

Pro tip: Put the Big 1 in your highest-energy window.

D) MoSCoW (Make Trade-offs Visible)

- Must have (non-negotiable this week)
- Should have (important, can slip a few days)
- Could have (nice, optional)
- Won't have (this week) (decide not to do—on purpose)

Try it. This week's MoSCoW:

Must: _____

Should: _____

Could: _____

Won't (this week): _____

Labeling a "Won't" is a plan, not procrastination.

3) Convert Priorities into Actions (Wording matters)

Vague → Specific, doable, time-boxed

"Do some reading" → Review Week-3 lecture notes for 25 min; highlight 5 key terms.

"House chores" → Declutter closet for 2 hours

"Reply to emails" → Process yesterday's inbox for 20 min; reply to 3 priority threads.

Use the formula: [Verb] + [Concrete outcome] + [Time box] + [When]

4) Reflect & Adjust (Daily 3-minute check-in)

- What moved today?
- What blocked me? (energy, time, clarity, resources)
- What will I change tomorrow? (sequence, scope, support)

Practice Scenario (from the workshop)

Pick 3 in order of priority and justify:

- Internship applications due in 4 days
- Essay due in 2 days (half done, worth 5%)
- Midterm in 4 days (worth 40%, haven't studied)
- Part-time job shift tonight (need extra cash)
- Friend's birthday dinner tonight (relationship cost if skipped)
- Laundry (no clean clothes for tomorrow)
- Exercise/self-care break (feeling burnt out)

How to decide: compare stakes + time needed + energy + alternatives (renegotiate, shorten, or combine).

Tools & Templates

- Digital: Todoist · Notion · Trello · Outlook tasks/calendars
- Analog: Printed matrix, daily Top-3 card, 1-3-5 sticky note
- Planning aids: SMART goals, time-blocking, working backwards, artificial deadlines

Contact & Support

Learning Development & Success (LDS)

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