

WHY IS MY “TO DO” LIST STILL NOT DONE?

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Most of us have days where quitting time rolls around and we realize we still haven’t touched anything on our list of things “to do” for the day. We’ve been “busy” all day, so why is there nothing crossed off the list?

More than likely, the main reason is a lack of focus and research indicates distractions are often the main culprit.

There is a constant stream of things competing for our attention during the day. These things include electronic forms of communication such as email, voicemail, phone calls, and instant messaging. There is also personal communication from coworkers. It’s hard to stay on task when there are so many distractions.

Studies have shown that people who turn off electronic communication sources and only check them at specific times during the day are more productive. It is recommended that you check in at specific intervals such as 10:00 am, 1:00 pm, and 4:00pm. When checking in, allow yourself a 15-30-minute window to respond, then turn them off again.

Distractions in the form of coworkers sometimes require a more delicate approach. If you are working on a project that requires complete concentration, close the door to your office. This will discourage physical interruptions and allow you to focus on the task at hand. If possible, try to either start your day early or stay late. This will give you time to focus when other people are typically not in the office,

Research also shows that taking little short-term breaks of 5 to 10 minutes every 90 minutes improves focus. Stretch or take a quick walk around the building and then return to your project with a clear head.



Last, but not least, don’t be a procrastinator. We’ve all had that project or task that we have been putting off for whatever reason. Don’t wait. You may find that once you complete the task it wasn’t as stressful as you thought and your mind will be clearer.

Remember that a habit takes three weeks to establish, so try focusing on one task at a time and experience the satisfaction of a completed “to do” list!

If you have questions about a business or tax issue, please contact your Account Manager or [Sue Freed, CPA](mailto:sfreed@connerash.com), at (314) 205-2510 or via email at sfreed@connerash.com.