

How to Get Things Done When You Don't Want To

Summary: *If you have a big list of things to do, break them down into manageable groups and figure out when you'll get them done.*

It happens to the best of us, sometimes every single day. There's that one thing that you just don't want to do or, in reality, that big list of things that you don't want to do. You avoid it by doing everything else on your To-Do list: you clean your home or desk, you go to the gym, you run errands, and you call your mother, grandmother, and Great Uncle Errol. Unfortunately, that list still needs to get done.

Even if you have a wonderful life or a job that you love, there are always tedious responsibilities that come with the good. If you find yourself struggling with tackling those difficult tasks far more often than you would like, here are some tips and tricks for how to get things done when you don't want to.

Break up the work.

Most people can't just plow through their work for hours at a time without a break. If you have a big list of things to do, break them down into manageable groups and figure out when you'll get them done. In between each group, make sure you do something to balance out the tedium, like getting lunch with a friend or taking a walk. You can even make a deal with yourself: for every one thing you finish that you don't want to do, you get to do something that you do want to do.

Schedule chores.

Putting your chores on your calendar, just as you would with a meeting, makes it more likely that you'll get that chore done. Write down on your calendar that every Wednesday after work you're going to do the laundry, or schedule your grocery shopping trip into the weekend. Seeing it on your calendar and working it into your schedule will make it harder to ignore.

Make routine chores easier.

If there's something you do consistently, like create invoices or send certain email responses, make a template that you can copy/paste and fill in the rest. Making a template will save you a considerable amount of time from retyping your document every time you need a new one, and it will make the mental hurdle easier as well. If it's a household chore, keep everything you need in one easy-to-reach place to take away any extra steps that might keep you from getting started.

Batch your To-Do list.

Take everything on your To-Do list and put it into categories of things that you can do together. Need to send a few emails? Do them all at once. Need to run a few different errands? Pick a time and do them all together. By putting these tasks into similar batches, you'll already be in the groove to get all of them done once you start with one, making it more likely that you'll finish everything.

Ask for help.

While there are many things you need to do yourself, especially at work, there are also things on your To-Do list that you could ask someone else to help you with. Whether it's giving the new intern a pile of files to sort through or asking your spouse to pick up dinner when you're running late, it's okay to lean on other people when you're feeling overwhelmed, especially if you know you'd do the same for them.