

HOW TO BE PRODUCTIVE

Juggling multiple projects

If working on multiple projects leaves you feeling like a professional juggler, following these principles might help.

❑ **Prioritise.** While it's tempting to cater to those who scream loudest (the boss?), prioritising should be balanced with the bigger picture. Make a schedule; even the crankiest boss can ease up when he or she sees you have a clear plan.

❑ **Write it down.** A mental to-do list filled with competing tasks can be unnecessarily exhausting. Instead, write a master list for each week containing the steps you aim to complete on each project. Keep the list nearby; a quick glance will remind you if anything important has been neglected. New week? New list.

❑ **Baby steps.** On your list, break each bigger project into as many small tasks as possible. Set aside time in your weekly schedule for an hour or two of "task blasting" on each project. This keeps things moving while your main focus is elsewhere.

❑ **Consciously ignore tasks.** While your overarching goal is to keep all projects moving, it's OK to ignore specific projects for a set period. To appease keen colleagues, give them fair warning. An email advising that you're dealing with something urgent but will be working on their project on Thursday can be enough. As long as you follow through on your promise.

❑ **Know when to focus.** Give larger tasks undivided attention for set periods. Two hours is a good amount of time to devote to a strategic or complicated task. After that, break things up by working on something different.

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