



Why Doctors, Managers Should Rethink Their To-Do Lists

December 05, 2014 | Healthcare Careers, Performance, Productivity, Work/Life Balance

By [Jeff Davidson](#)

Ambitious physicians often face the problem of taking on too much. They've been so effective at accomplishing things in the course of their medical career that they seek to accomplish even more. Their inherent productivity causes them to create longer and more involved to-do lists than others.

The problem is that these individuals are setting themselves up for failure. They unconsciously ensure that they won't reach the end of their list, by continually adding more tasks after accomplishing just a few.

This approach to managing one's to-do list is fraught with problems. It is both rewarding and appropriate when you cross off everything on your list and feel complete about your achievements. When you're able to finish your lists, say two to four times a week, you often return to the office the next morning with more energy, focus, and direction than you might presume.

Conversely, when you perpetually leave the office with unfinished tasks for that day's to-do list, you unconsciously engender a situation in which you never quite feel complete or satisfied, and you find yourself in a perpetual "striving" mode.

In the short run, it's OK to leave unfinished tasks, especially when you're on a specific campaign or project. In the long run, however, continually overextending your daily to-do list can have a harmful, de-motivating effect on your life.

It's understandable that as a highly ambitious person you want to achieve as much as you can and build a strong practice. If you're not careful, however, and you attempt to accomplish one major task after another instead of alternating large and small tasks, your productivity could suffer. Attempting to tackle one major task after another can become mind-numbing, stressful, and frustrating.

Hereafter, choose to tackle a handful of key tasks in a given day, alternating them with some minor tasks so that you can maintain a fairly high level of energy and allow yourself to leave the office with a sense of completion.

You'll be more effective with patients and staff the next day, as well as throughout the course of your

week, month, year, and career. You'll engender a distinct sense of accomplishment while experiencing, at the least, recurring feelings of work-life balance.