

How to use the Eisenhower Matrix

What it is

A 2x2 grid that sorts your to-do list by how urgent and how important each task really is.

It comes from a habit attributed to President Eisenhower: separate what matters from what merely feels pressing.

When to use it

Whenever your to-do list feels too long, or you can't tell what to do first.

Steps

1. **Do first, urgent and important.** Anything that can't wait and truly matters goes here.
2. **Schedule, important but not urgent.** Give it a specific time so it doesn't get lost.
3. **Delegate, urgent but not important.** If someone else can do it, hand it off.
4. **Delete, not urgent and not important.** Cross it off. It's not worth your time.

Common mistake

Calling everything urgent. Most tasks aren't, be honest about what actually can't wait.

Pairs with

Ivy Lee Method and Pomodoro Technique.

Example: a Saturday to-do list

Date: Sat, Mar 14

1 Do first Urgent and important

Pay the overdue electric bill

Pick up the prescription today

Finish the report due Monday

3 Delegate Urgent, not important

Have my partner grab groceries

Ask a coworker to cover my shift

Get the neighbor's kid to mow the lawn

2 Schedule Important, not urgent

Book the annual physical

Start the house down payment fund

Plan the anniversary trip

4 Delete Not urgent, not important

Reorganize the garage

Binge the new show

Eisenhower Matrix Worksheet

Date: _____

1 Do first Urgent and important

2 Schedule Important, not urgent

3 Delegate Urgent, not important

4 Delete Not urgent, not important
