

How to use the 80/20 Rule

What it is

A way to find the small number of things that cause most of your results, so you can focus there first.

It comes from economist Vilfredo Pareto, who noticed that 20 percent of Italy's pea pods held 80 percent of the peas. The exact numbers vary, but the pattern shows up everywhere.

When to use it

When your list of tasks, chores, or expenses feels too big to tackle all at once.

Steps

1. **List everything.** Write down every task, chore, or expense you're weighing.
2. **Rank by impact.** Rewrite the list with the biggest impact first.
3. **Mark your vital few.** Circle the top items, usually a fifth of the list, that drive most of the result.

Common mistake

Treating every item as equally important. Most of them barely move the needle.

Pairs with

Eisenhower Matrix and Ivy Lee Method.

Example: cutting the monthly budget

Date: Sun, Mar 9

List everything

Rent

Car payment

Eating out

Groceries

Gym membership

Streaming subscriptions

Rank by impact Biggest first.

1 Rent

2 Car payment

3 Eating out

4 Gym membership

5 Groceries

6 Streaming subscriptions

Your vital few Circle the top fifth, then focus there.

☒ Cut eating out

☒ Refinance the car loan

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80/20 Vital Few Audit

Date: _____

List everything

Rank by impact Biggest first.

1

2

3

4

5

6

Your vital few Circle the top fifth, then focus there.

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