

How to Use the Eisenhower Matrix: Quick Instructions

STEP 1	Capture Everything in the Inbox	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Write down all your tasks in the Inbox section as soon as you think of them. - This is your “brain dump”—a trusted place to move tasks out of your head and into a list, so you don’t have to remember everything yourself.
STEP 2	Sort Tasks into the Four Quadrants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - For each task in your Inbox, decide: Is it urgent? Is it important? - Move each task into its appropriate quadrant: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do First: Urgent and important tasks—work on these immediately. • Schedule: Important but not urgent—plan when you’ll do these. • Delegate: Urgent but not important—assign these to someone else. • Don’t Do: Neither urgent nor important—eliminate or minimize these.
STEP 3	Move Completed Tasks to the Done Column	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - When you finish a task, move it from its quadrant to the Done column. - The Done column helps you keep track of your achievements and provides a refreshing way to see what you’ve accomplished. - This gives you that all-important satisfaction of ticking off completed items from your to-do list. <p><i>Use Multiple Matrices for Projects (if helpful): If you’re juggling several projects, you can create a separate Eisenhower Matrix for each one. This lets you focus on the unique priorities, deadlines, and important tasks for each project—making sure nothing falls through the cracks and carving out clarity in complex workloads.</i></p>

Pro Tips: Use the Eisenhower Matrix to Beat Overwhelm

1	Start Small	Only sort as many tasks as you feel comfortable tackling. If your Inbox feels too long, focus on categorizing the top 5–10 most pressing items so your matrix stays manageable and not intimidating.
2	Set Boundaries for Each Quadrant	If a quadrant fills up, pause and review. Ask yourself: Can anything be moved, delegated, delayed, or even dropped? This helps prevent overload and keeps your action plan clear.
3	Use Timers	Give yourself just 5–10 minutes to categorize tasks. Don't strive for perfection—aim for good enough decisions that keep you moving forward.
4	Be Realistic About Your Capacity	Don't overload your “Do First” quadrant. Only put in what you can truly achieve today or this week; move other urgent tasks to “Schedule” or “Delegate” as needed.
5	Celebrate Your Wins	Move finished tasks to the “Done” column right away! Take a moment to acknowledge progress—it's motivating and reinforces effective habits.
6	Review and Refresh Regularly	Set a daily or weekly reminder to review your Inbox and matrix. Clear away completed or outdated items to keep things streamlined and energizing.
7	Don't Overthink Quadrant Placement	Quickly decide on urgency and importance—if you're unsure, pick a quadrant and move on. The point is action, not analysis paralysis.
8	Customize for Your Needs	If a certain type of task or project repeats, create a note in your Matrix reminding you how you'll handle it next time. Make this tool work for your personal workflow.
9	Give Yourself Permission to “Don't Do”	Treat the “Don't Do” quadrant seriously thus consciously minimizing or eliminating low-value tasks is crucial for reducing overwhelm.

EISENHOWER MATRIX

INBOX (1)

Confirm client's rescheduled meeting time today

Review and approve vendor invoices received this week

Draft next month's social media posts calendar

Attend optional team meeting

SORT (2)*

Do First
(URGENT AND IMPORTANT)

Prepare urgent presentation for tomorrow's client call

Schedule
(IMPORTANT BUT NOT URGENT)

Enroll in online course on productivity tools

Catch up on non-urgent info emails

Delegate
(URGENT BUT NOT URGENT)

Coordinate team member calendar for recurring client calls

Forward client requests for standard data reports to analyst

Don't Do
(NOT URGENT AND NOT IMPORTANT)

Scan this week's company updates

DONE (3)

Organize old digital files that aren't currently used

Troubleshoot website downtime affecting client's project

*MATRIX KEY

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• Schedule: Important but not urgent, plan when you'll do these.

• Delegate: Urgent but not important, assign these to someone else.

• Don't Do: Neither urgent nor important, eliminate or minimize these.

EISENHOWER MATRIX

INBOX (1)

Do First
(URGENT AND IMPORTANT)

Schedule
(IMPORTANT BUT NOT URGENT)

Delegate
(URGENT BUT NOT URGENT)

Don't Do
(NOT URGENT AND NOT IMPORTANT)

Sort (2)*

DONE (3)

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