

Return on Minute

Dwight D. Eisenhower, the 34th president of the United States, knew how to get sh*t done. During his presidency, Eisenhower faced numerous demands on his time, including managing the [Cold War](#), a period of geopolitical tension between the United States and the Soviet Union. To manage these demands on his time, he employed a method of task prioritization that later became known as the Eisenhower Matrix. Ideal for quick decisions on immediate priorities, especially in daily task management and short-term planning – the Eisenhower Matrix classifies tasks by urgency and importance, guiding decision-makers on what to do, delegate, schedule, or eliminate.

What is Urgent and Important

Urgent tasks require your immediate attention, and likely have clear consequences if not completed within a specific timeline. These are the tasks that, if avoided or delayed for a significant period of time, can lead to higher levels of stress and burnout. Examples of urgent tasks include finishing a project or assignment with a fast-approaching deadline.

Important tasks do not require your immediate attention but should be completed because they help you achieve your long-term goals. These are the tasks that still matter despite not being due right away and take careful planning so that you can use your time and resources efficiently.

How To: Categorize tasks or projects into four quadrants based on urgency and importance:

- **Urgent and Important:** Do these first. (Make hay while the sun shines)
- **Important, Not Urgent:** Schedule these. (Sow the seeds)
- **Urgent, Not Important:** Delegate if possible. (Clean the barn)
- **Not Urgent, Not Important:** Eliminate or minimize.

	NOT URGENT	URGENT
IMPORTANT	Schedule these. Tasks with unclear or future deadlines that contribute to long-term success	Do these first. Tasks with deadlines or consequences
NOT IMPORTANT	Eliminate or minimize. Unnecessary tasks, distractions or time wasters	Delegate if possible. Tasks that require your attention but have no clear deadline

Pro Tips:

- Limit the number of tasks in each quadrant to no more than 10.
- Try making separate to-do lists for your work, and personal responsibilities.
- If you are a visual learner, you may want to color code your tasks based on the quadrant they were placed in.

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WHAT I NEED TO DO TODAY: _____

		NOT URGENT		URGENT			
I M P O R T A N T	Schedule these. Tasks with unclear or future deadlines that contribute to long-term success	Item	Due Date	Do these first. Tasks with deadlines or consequences	Item	Due Date	
	N O T I M P O R T A N T	Eliminate or minimize. Unnecessary tasks, distractions or time wasters	Item		Delegate if possible. Tasks that require your attention but no clear deadline	Item	

