

THE Myth OF Multitasking

EXERCISE

(Are you being productive ... or are you switchtasking? The following exercise will help you quickly understand the negative impact on efficiency caused by switchtasking.)

Switchtasking is a thief	
S	
1	
S	
1	

FIRST PASS

1. Have a timer with a second hand ready. For best results have another person time you.
2. In the first row, copy the phrase "Switchtasking is a thief". After copying the entire phrase in the first row, then switch to the second row and write the numbers 1-21.
3. Ready, Set, Go! (After you have completed the last number (21), write down your total time to completion.)

Like this:

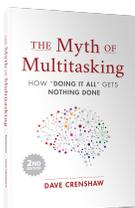
Switchtasking is a thief.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21

6. Ready, Set, Go! (After you have completed the last number (21), write down your total time to completion.)
7. Compare your results between the first and second pass. Typically, a person who is switchtasking will 1) Take much longer to complete the exercise, 2) See a considerable decrease in the quality of work, and 3) Experience more personal stress.

SECOND PASS

4. Have a timer with a second hand ready again.
5. In the third row, copy the phrase "Switchtasking is a thief". For every letter you write in the "S" row, switch to the fourth row (labeled "1") and write the corresponding number.



Adapted from *The Myth of Multitasking: How "Doing It All" Gets Nothing Done* (Second Edition) by Dave Crenshaw.

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