Exercise

Are you really multitasking … or are you switchtasking? The following exercise will help you quickly understand the negative impact in efficiency caused by switchtasking.

First Pass
1. Have a timer with a second hand ready again.
2. In the third row, re-copy the phrase “Multitasking is Worse Than a Lie”. After copying the entire phrase in the third row, then switch to the fourth row and write the numbers 1-27.
3. Ready, Set, Go! (After you have completed the last number (27), write down your total time to completion.)

Second Pass
4. Have a timer with a second hand ready. For best results have another person time you.
5. In the first row, copy the phrase “Multitasking is Worse Than a Lie”. For every letter you write in the “M” row, switch to the second row (labeled “1”) and write the corresponding number. Like this:
   Multitasking is worse than a lie.
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27
6. Ready, Set, Go! (After you have completed the last number (27), write down your total time to completion.)
7. Compare the time to completion between the first and second pass. Typically, a person will take twice as long to complete this exercise when switchtasking (second pass) vs. focusing on one task at a time (first pass).

Adapted from The Myth of Multitasking: How “Doing It All” Gets Nothing Done by Dave Crenshaw.