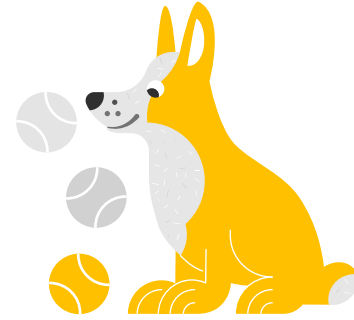


Productivity



Issues with multi-tasking

Avoiding multi-tasking

Try to avoid multi-tasking too frequently; if you keep switching from one task to the next - this can have a negative impact on productivity.

The importance of 'executive function' on multi-tasking

Often described as the “management system of the brain”, executive function is a set of mental skills that enable us to plan, focus attention, remember instructions, and juggle multiple tasks successfully.

"Our brains respond to multitasking by managing it with executive functions. These control and manage cognitive processes and determine how, when, and in what order certain tasks are performed." - Meyer, Evans, and Rubinstein

According to Meyer, Evans, and Rubinstein, there are two stages to the executive control process (very well mind, 2020):

1. Goal shifting:

When we decide to do one thing instead of another. So you are writing that email, then suddenly start to respond to someone who's contacted you on messenger, then the phone rings.

2. Role activation:

When we change from the rules for the previous task to rules for the new task; now that we have decided to move onto the new task, we have to get into the appropriate mindset to do it.

Although moving through these stages may only add a few tenths of a second, this can really start to add up when we switch back and forth repeatedly. This may not seem important, when doing daily tasks which require little thought or effort (e.g. folding sheets whilst watching tv), but when it comes to tasks that require focus (answering emails or doing a discovery call), or situations that require safety (dog walking and answering emails), even small amounts of time can prove critical!