

MONOTASKING: YOUR MANTRA FOR MENTAL WELLBEING AND PRODUCTIVITY

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There is a famous quote about how multitasking inhibits productivity while monotasking boosts it. In today’s times where hectic lifestyles and super busy schedules are the order of the day, it is common for individuals to multitask, whether you are at home or in the office. Juggling multiple tasks throughout the day, often leaves you exhausted, drained and simply burnt out. Having too many things on your plate, with many of them in varying stages of completion can only lead to stress, frustration, loss of focus and poor productivity. While multitasking is often glorified and revered, research and studies have increasingly proven that our brain is not geared for multitasking and that a mere 2.5% of people can master the art of doing multiple things successfully. So, how does one beat multitasking? The answer is simple – Monotasking. Read on to find out more.

ADVANTAGES GALORE

What exactly is monotasking? Well, it is simply focusing on a single task until completion. *“Monotasking, also known as single-tasking, is the practice of focusing on one task at a time without allowing distractions to divert your attention. This approach offers several advantages that significantly enhance productivity and well-being. By dedicating your full attention to one task, you can complete it more efficiently and with higher quality. This eliminates the time lost in switching between tasks. Concentrating on one task also allows for deeper engagement, leading to more thorough and error-free work. Moreover, monotasking gives your brain the space to delve deeper into the subject matter, fostering innovative ideas and solutions”* says **Dr. Malini Saba**, psychologist, human and social rights activist and founder of the Anannke Foundation. Further, monotasking helps create a calmer and more manageable workflow, promoting mental well-being. Multitasking splits your attention between tasks, often leading to mistakes and decreased quality leading to stress and disillusionment. Monotasking, on the other hand, allows you to fully immerse yourself in one task, enhancing your focus and attention to detail. *“While multitasking may give the illusion of efficiency, it actually slows down overall progress due to frequent context switching. Monotasking reduces the cognitive load and allows for faster completion of tasks. Additionally, multitasking can be mentally exhausting and lead to cognitive overload, whereas monotasking promotes a sense of achievement and reduces anxiety by completing one task at a time. For instance, when managing business operations and coordinating social rights initiatives, I schedule these activities separately rather than overlapping them. This ensures that each task receives my full attention and expertise, leading to more productive and satisfying outcomes”* adds **Dr. Saba**.

RELEVANCE IN THE CURRENT TIMES

In today’s fast-paced world, the importance of monotasking cannot be overemphasized. With the constant influx of information which demands our attention, monotasking provides a much-needed counterbalance. It helps in combating digital overload, as the prevalence of digital devices and notifications frequently fragments our attention. For example, it has become the norm to check mails during meals and scroll Instagram during family time. Monotasking helps in reclaiming control over our attention and in reducing digital distractions.

More importantly, it is key to note that monotasking aligns with the principles of mindfulness, encouraging us to be present and fully engaged in the current activity. This is sure to enhance the overall quality of life and provide mental clarity. *“By giving our full attention to one person or one task at a time, we can build deeper connections and more meaningful interactions; whether in a professional setting or in personal life. For example, as a single mother, I practice monotasking during family time by putting away work-related distractions. I focus solely on my child, which strengthens our bond and ensures we spend quality time together”* quips Dr. Saba.

LIFESTYLE CHOICE

Monotasking is not just a productivity technique; it is a lifestyle choice that can significantly enhance both professional and personal well-being. It encourages us to slow down and appreciate the process, leading to a more fulfilling and balanced life. There are several ways to stay focused and channelize your energy on the task in hand. The first step is to start your day with some simple breathing exercises or ‘pranayama’ to help you focus better. Do a simple 5–10minute meditation to improve mindfulness. Switch off unnecessary notifications and give yourself a social media break for some time each day. Make time to read or go for a walk as all this helps relax your mind and help you concentrate on the task in hand. *“As someone who juggles multiple roles – psychologist, environmentalist, activist, and businesswoman – I have found that embracing monotasking allows me to manage my responsibilities more effectively and with greater satisfaction. I encourage everyone to give monotasking a try. Start with small steps, such as dedicating specific time blocks for tasks and minimizing distractions during that period. Over time, you will notice an improvement in your efficiency, work quality, and overall mental health”* concludes Dr. Saba.

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