



## Think Multitasking Is Productive?

By [Susan M. Heathfield](#), About.com Guide May 10, 2012

Looking for tips about how to increase your ability to focus on tasks and stay productive at work? One of the problems employees who are multitasking and doing more work face is that they may be, in fact, accomplishing less.

"As professionals are expected to do more on the job, many are actually doing less, less effectively due to an inability to focus on key priorities," according to [Joelle K. Jay, PhD. \(pictured\)](#), noted executive coach and author. She says that neuroscientists have found that people use maximum focus for only about three minutes in an hour. This

results in fragmented actions, interrupted thinking, hasty decisions and overall poor quality of work.



For employers, is employee multitasking a problem? Yes. Companies lose an average of 2.1 hours a day on employee productivity because of multitasking and related interruptions.

Solutions exist to counter this multitasking, the lack of focus and concentration by employees. Dr. Jay, the author of *The Inner Edge: The 10 Practices for Personal Leadership*, says that, "If you don't schedule time to work on important projects and objectives, you can end up bouncing from one task to another, becoming so buried in the minutia of day-to-day operations that you lose sight of the grander vision for your career. Your actions become reactive rather than strategically aligned with achieving your goals."

She recommends these actions.

- "Establish a short list of well-chosen priorities. Remember that having 20 priorities is the same as not having any priorities.
- "Schedule time to work on a project and treat this time as an appointment, meaning no interruptions. Even if it is just for an hour, set aside this **golden hour** of unitasking to work exclusively on one project.
- "Try to schedule activities that benefit from the same mindset within a block of time. For example, plan to conduct research and write during the morning and reserve the afternoon for more high-energy, interactive pursuits such as sales calls and client meetings. In this way, you can get into a groove and be more productive."

Do you have thoughts about focus, prioritizing, and accomplishing tasks and goals at work? Please share your secrets.