

Eat That Frog

Your frog is the biggest, most important task on your plate: the one you are most likely to put off, and the one that would make the biggest difference once it is done. The whole method fits in one sentence. Find your frog, and eat it first.

WHAT IT IS

A daily habit of choosing the single task that matters most and doing it before anything else: before email, messages or small wins.

Two rules: if you have two frogs, eat the ugliest one first. And don't sit staring at it, because waiting only makes it bigger.

WHY IT WORKS

In most lists, a small share of the items creates most of the value. Out of ten tasks, two are often worth more than the other eight together.

The valuable tasks tend to be the hard ones, and the easy ones feel productive. Doing the frog first stops the easy ones from eating your day.

Finishing something important gives you a lift, and that lift makes the next frog easier to start.

WHEN TO USE IT

Every working day, starting the night before.

When everything feels urgent and you don't know where to begin.

When one task has been sitting on your list for days.

At the end of each week, to see where your time really went.

THE LONG VIEW

The book leans on research about **time perspective**: people who make today's choices with the next five, ten or twenty years in mind tend to move further in life. Doing the hard, important thing first is long-term thinking, practiced one morning at a time.

HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT

- 1 **Tonight, list tomorrow.** Write every task down on the ABCDE sheet. Planning pays back: the book's rule of thumb is that one minute of planning saves about ten minutes of doing.
- 2 **Sort with letters.** Mark each task A, B, C, D or E by its consequences. Never do a B while an A is waiting. Number your A tasks: your A-1 is your frog.
- 3 **Set up the morning.** Copy the frog onto the Daily Planner. Write the first thin slice you'll do, and get your desk and tools ready.
- 4 **Eat it first.** Spend your first 90 minutes on the frog, alerts off, without switching tasks. Tick it off when it's done.
- 5 **Review on Friday.** Use the Weekly Review to see which tasks created the most value, and pick next week's frog.

Based on the ideas in Eat That Frog! by Brian Tracy. Independent summary of the book's key ideas, in our own words. Not affiliated with the author or publisher.

The ABCDE Sheet

Fill this in the night before. List everything, then give each task a letter by asking one question: what happens if I don't do this?

FOR _____ DATE _____

A **Must do**
Serious
consequences if
not done.

B **Should do**
Mild
consequences.

C **Nice to do**
No
consequences at
all.

D **Delegate**
Someone else
can do it.

E **Eliminate**
Drop it on purpose.

#	TASK	IF I DON'T DO IT... <i>consequence, now and in months</i>	LETTER <i>A to E</i>	RANK <i>A-1, A-2</i>
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
11				
12				
13				
14				

MY FROG: A-1 *the ugliest one goes first*

D: HAND TO WHOM?

E: DROPPING ON PURPOSE

The rule: never start a B while an A is still waiting. You will always be putting something off, so choose what you postpone instead of letting it happen to you.

Daily Frog Planner

Start the day with the frog, not with your inbox. Fill the top half the night before, the bottom half as you go.

DATE _____ START TIME _____ ALERTS OFF UNTIL _____

TODAY'S FROG *one task, the one that would make the biggest difference*

WHY IT MATTERS *what changes in a year if I do it*

THE FIRST THIN SLICE *too big? one piece I can finish*

GET READY *the night before or first thing*

- ☐ Desk cleared, only this task in front of me
- ☐ Everything I need is gathered
- ☐ Phone on silent, email closed
- ☐ I know my first slice
- ☐ I tell myself: I can do this. Start.

FIRST 90 MINUTES *frog only, no switching*

MIN	WHAT I'M WORKING ON
0:00	
0:15	
0:30	
0:45	
1:00	
1:15	

DONE?

- ☐ Frog eaten, finished
- ☐ Big slice done, finish tomorrow
- ☐ Not yet. What got in the way:

THEN, IN ORDER

RANK	TASK	DONE
A-2		
A-3		
B		
B		

TOMORROW'S FROG _____

TONIGHT: WHAT DID STARTING WITH THE FROG GIVE ME TODAY?

Weekly Review: the 80/20 Check

Ten minutes on Friday. See which tasks really moved things, find the few areas your work depends on, and choose next week's frog.

WEEK OF _____ FROGS EATEN _____ OUT OF _____

1 · WHERE MY TIME WENT *list up to 10 things you spent time on. Circle the 2 that created the most value.*

#	TASK OR ACTIVITY	HOURS	VALUE <i>low · mid · high</i>	STILL FELT IN A YEAR?
1			L M H	yes no
2			L M H	yes no
3			L M H	yes no
4			L M H	yes no
5			L M H	yes no
6			L M H	yes no
7			L M H	yes no
8			L M H	yes no
9			L M H	yes no
10			L M H	yes no

2 · MY KEY RESULT AREAS *the 3 to 5 things my job really depends on. Rate yourself honestly: your weakest one tends to hold back the rest.*

AREA	HOW GOOD AM I? 1 TO 10	ONE WAY TO IMPROVE

3 · THE ONLY-ME QUESTION *what can only I do that, done well, would make a real difference?*

4 · THE LEAVE-TOWN TEST *if I had to leave for a month tomorrow, which 1 or 2 things would I finish first?*

NEXT WEEK'S FROG

Pocket Cards

Cut along the dashed lines. Keep one in your wallet, one on your desk.

EAT THAT FROG

What is my frog today?

- The biggest, most important task. The one I'd rather avoid.
- Two frogs? Eat the ugliest one first.
- Don't stare at it. Start.
- Before email, before messages.

Day 01

▶ Road MBA

SORT YOUR LIST

A B C D E

- **A** must do: serious consequences
- **B** should do: mild consequences
- **C** nice to do: none
- **D** delegate · **E** eliminate
- Never a B while an A is waiting.

Day 01

▶ Road MBA

FIND THE FROG

Three questions

- What happens if I don't do this, in a year?
- What can only I do that would make a real difference?
- If I left town for a month tomorrow, what would I finish first?

Day 01

▶ Road MBA

EAT IT

How to start

- Plan tonight: one minute of planning saves about ten.
- Clear the desk, gather what you need.
- Alerts off. One task, no switching.
- Too big? Cut one thin slice and finish it.
- Talk to yourself like a coach.

Day 01

▶ Road MBA

EVERY FRIDAY

The 80/20 check

- Which 2 tasks created most of the value?
- Which areas does my work really depend on?
- My weakest key skill holds back the rest.
- Pick next week's frog before Monday.

Day 01

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THINK LONG

Coach, not critic

- Today's choice, with the next 5, 10, 20 years in mind.
- A little discomfort now, a bigger payoff later.
- Say it: I can do this. Then do the first slice.
- Finishing feels good. Let it hook you.

Day 01

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ONE LINE TO REMEMBER

Name your frog before you arrive, and start it before anything else.

Road MBA · Day 01 toolkit, based on the ideas in Eat That Frog! by Brian Tracy. Independent summary of the book's key ideas, in our own words. Not affiliated with the author or publisher.