

Is multitasking even a thing?

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If you've never had 67 things to do within the span of three days while constantly feeling like you'll crack under pressure, then you have either lived a very comfortably lazy life, or you really know how to manage your time. Whenever I am faced with such tremendous pressure, I resort to multitasking. But maybe that isn't such a good idea.

Many psychologists and neuroscientists say that multitasking is just a fancy name for task switching; it's a word humans came up with to make themselves feel better about constantly switching from one task to another, all the while not paying enough attention any of the work at hand. Earl Miller, a neuroscience professor at MIT, says "The brain is very good at deluding itself. In reality, it simply cannot focus on more than one thing at a time." If you have a habit of constantly switching between tasks, you'll feel like you're working all the time, yet not getting any real work done.

When you're writing an e-mail in one tab and studying a textbook pdf in another, that is task switching. But if you were reading an email while your textbook downloads, that would be multitasking, because you're getting something done in the time when you'd passively wait for the book to download. Know the difference.

So the next time you're faced with too much work, try to do one thing at a time. Otherwise you will end up with a bunch of half-done tasks of subpar quality, and nobody wants that.