Get Organized Step-By-Step... with Swift To-Do List

Hi there! I'm Jiri Novotny, <u>Swift To-Do List</u> designer and author of <u>Swift Mind Freedom</u>.

This e-book contains 21 self-contained mini-chapters, based on the Swift To-Do List email course.

By following the steps, you will get in control, stop being overwhelmed and paralyzed by complexity, handle all your tasks like a pro without missing anything, overcome procrastination, become reliable and efficient, and achieve both the big and small things in your work and life.



To navigate in this PDF file, you can use the Bookmarks feature of Acrobat Reader, or the table of contents on the next page.

Also, there are 5 bonus chapters not included in the original email course:

- <u>#07 Checking your to-do list</u>
- <u>#16 Task attachments</u>
- <u>#17 Customizing fields</u>
- <u>#18 Editing tasks in-place</u>
- <u>#19 How to make your to-do list more empowering for action</u>

Feel free to share this PDF e-book with your colleagues and friends that can benefit from it.

Enjoy the e-book. I hope you will find the information helpful.

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PS: If you have any questions at all, don't hesitate to contact <u>contact me and my team</u>.

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Download and install Swift To-Do List

The first step is to download and install Swift To-Do List. If you have not already done so, download it now from our website:

http://www.dextronet.com/download/swift-to-do-list

Run the downloaded **swifttodolist.exe** file – and it will start the setup.

Finish the setup (it takes just a few clicks).

Congratulations, you now have Swift To-Do List installed! (Yep, it's that simple!)

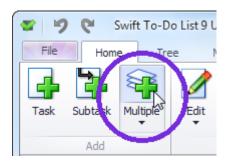
Now we can start -

#01 How to get organized in 5 minutes

We will do a "brain-dump" and put all tasks that you currently have in your head into Swift To-Do List. This is the best way to get started immediately. **You will experience immediate relief and get in control.**

I want you to do the following:

- 1. Open **Swift To-Do List**. (You can use the system-wide hotkey **Ctrl+Alt+S** if it's already running)
- 2. Click the Multiple button to open the Add Multiple Tasks window (or, press Ctrl+H)



3. In the Add Multiple Tasks window, input all the tasks that are currently on your mind, one per line. Input even the not-so-important tasks.

When in doubt whether to write any particular task or not, ask yourself: Would I be completely comfortable forgetting this forever? If not, write it down.

For each task, try to be as specific as possible, and write the actual action you need to do (use a verb).

Add Multiple Tasks	X
Add Multiple Tasks Enter one task per line. Tasks will be added to the	is list: <u> My To-Do List</u>
Finish project A Finish project B Finish project C Start using Swift To-Do List daily Reply to John's email Write the proposal for Peter Learn how to juggle chainsaws Preserve tasks order	A A A A A A A A Cancel

You should aim to capture at least 20 tasks – but really, your goal is to write down everything that you juggle in your head.

4. When you are done writing, confirm by clicking the **Add Tasks** button at the bottom of the **Add Multiple Tasks** window (or by pressing **Ctrl+Enter**).

Congratulations! You've made your first step towards being in total control of your work.

Later, you can prioritize the tasks, create different to-do lists and move the tasks between them using Drag and Drop, write notes for each task, etc.

#02 How to stay organized

It's important to put all the tasks into Swift To-Do List, because when you keep any important tasks in your mind, and not organized in your computer, you are likely to be stressed, anxious, worried and inefficient.

You will live in fear that you are missing something important, always doubting yourself and your current activity. Your mental resources will be wasted by trying to juggle all the information – and worrying about forgetting it!



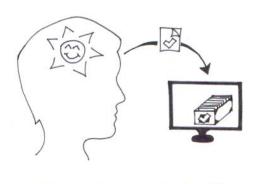
DON'T DO THIS TO YOURSELF! DON'T STORE 'STUFF' IN YOUR MIND.

That's why "emptying your mind" into Swift To-Do List works so remarkably well.

Doing the initial "brain-dump" is great, but you also need to stay organized -

The only way to stay organized and keep your mind empty is to always capture all new tasks into Swift To-Do List, immediately when they come to you.

Whenever a new task comes your way, open Swift To-Do List (e.g. by using the handy system-wide **Ctrl+Alt+S** hotkey), and enter the task into it. You can use the **Add Task** button for that (or **Ctrl+T**).



PUT NEW THINGS IMMEDIATELY INTO YOUR SWIFT TO-DO LIST

Tip: There is also another system-wide hotkey, **Ctrl+Alt+A**, which opens the **Add Task** window directly. Try it right now! By the way, you can change these hotkeys using menu **File** - **Options**.

You are now smarter than most people when it comes to organizing one's tasks!

#03 How to manage your notes and ideas

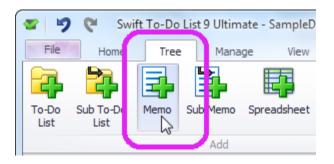
Swift To-Do List allows you to manage not just tasks and lists, but also notes.

When you select a task, the notes panel at the bottom of Swift To-Do List window displays notes for that particular task. This is a very useful feature, and you should use it for storing any information related to a task.

But what if you need to write down some information not related to any of your tasks? Well, that's where the "memo" feature comes in.

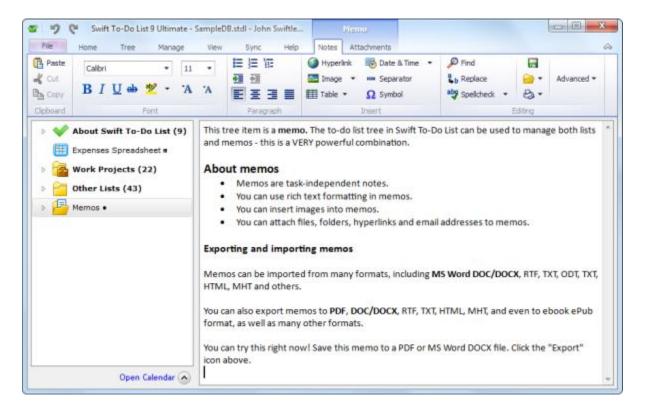
Memos are task-independent notes that you can create right in the to-do list tree.

Let's add a new memo now. Click Tree, and then click Memo in the Add group.



In the Add Memo window, type in "My Notes", select some icon, and click the OK button.

This is what it looks like when a memo is displayed:



I recommend you to use memos to store all important information not related to any specific task. For information related to a specific task, use their respective task notes instead.

How to import memos and notes from files

Here's a tip: You can import memos (and task notes) from MS Word, TXT, RTF, HTML, RTF, OpenOffice and many other formats. You can export them to same formats, and additionally also to PDF.

Use the Import button to load task notes or a memo from a file.

Similarly, use the **Export** button to save them to a file.



Using memos for managing ideas and information

Never put ideas and other non-task information into your to-do list.

Putting non-tasks in your to-do list will make your to-do list impossible to finish. However, memos are perfect for storing any ideas and all non-task information.

Memos are perfect for storing "maybe" tasks as well – if you are not sure you want to do something at all yet, just write it into a memo. You can also expand your thoughts more easily inside the memo.

Put your ideas and other information into a memo now Having to remember important information is stressful – it's far better to write such information down, and then relax knowing where it is.

You've already captured some tasks, but you probably juggle other important things in your mind, not just tasks, right? Let's take this to the next level:

Write all the things you juggle in your head, but that are not tasks, into a memo in Swift To-Do List.

Then, for extra credit, open your to-do list again, and remove all entries that are not tasks from it, and put them into the memo as well.

Note: If you have some task-related information, it's best to capture it into the notes of that particular task instead. I will tell you more about this the day after tomorrow.

#04 How to consolidate your to-do lists

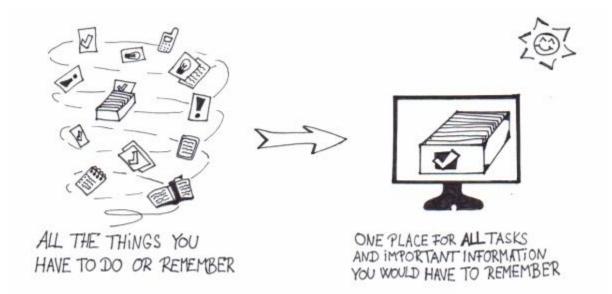
Do you have any tasks written outside of Swift To-Do List?

I'm asking you this, because the golden rule of organizing just about anything is:

Keep it in one place.

In our case, we could also say "keep all tasks in one place", or, "consolidate your to-do's".

Consolidating all your to-do lists means placing all your tasks, ideas, and other related information together into Swift To-Do List:



This is vital. Why? Well, if you **don't** keep your tasks in one place:

- You lose and forget important things.
- You are inefficient, because you waste time searching for things and can't get a quick overview of everything
- You can't fully trust your organizing system and start keeping things in your mind

That sounds pretty bad, huh?

Fortunately, once you **do** consolidate your tasks:

- You can relax and experience a peace of mind. You know you will never lose, forget or miss any important information. Imagine how great that feels! In this day and age, it's like a super-power.
- You have a system you can fully trust. You can quickly locate everything you need.
- You are in total control. You can always get a complete overview of urgent and important things.

Why we don't naturally keep tasks in one place

Because there are dozens of ways of storing our tasks, we tend to store them on multiple papers, sticky notes, computer files, software, emails, devices and even rooms or buildings.

... and that is the problem!

We never take the time to think about it, and setup one place for all our tasks. Until now – with Swift To-Do List.

(By the way, I am not talking about reference material, such as documents, articles, contracts, etc. Although I recommend you to store reference material in a single location as well, it doesn't have to be in Swift To-Do List - sometimes, that wouldn't even be practical.)

Consolidate your tasks into Swift To-Do List now

And now, the most important part. This is what I want you to do:

- 1. Find and collect all the papers, sticky-notes and computer files that contain your tasks, ideas or notes. Focus particularly on tasks (things you can do).
- 2. Go through all the collected material, one piece at a time.
- 3. Enter all the tasks, ideas and notes from the collected material into Swift To-Do List. If some things are not important anymore, you can just omit/delete them.

In Swift To-Do List, you can add tasks using the **Add Task** button, or add multiple tasks using the **Add Multiple** button.

You can also paste tasks in plain-text into the task-view (both single and multiple tasks).

Lists in CSV format can be imported using menu **File – Import Wizard**. (Excel can save files as CSV.)

New lists can be easily created using menu Tree - Add To-Do List (Ctrl+R).

New memos can be easily created using **menu Tree – Add Memo**. Use them to store notes and ideas not related to any specific task.

You can create multiple lists and memos if you wish – e.g. you can group tasks by projects or topic, so it's manageable and not too mixed up.

I also highly recommend you to put ideas separately from your tasks.

So - do you have any tasks written outside of Swift To-Do List? Could you place some of them into Swift To-Do List today? Do it.

#05 How to use task notes

In Swift To-Do List, each task has its own notes.

The task notes panel below the task-view always displays notes of the selected task.

Click inside the notes area to display the rich **Notes** editing tab.

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	y To-Do List (1)	Task Name			Priority	Du	e Date	Flags	and ag	
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Now the *really* important part: At times you will have information, reference material or notes that are directly connected to a specific task. You want this information handy when you look at the task. Put this information into the notes section of that particular task.

This way, when you work on the task, you will immediately see the important related information, and it also won't unnecessarily clutter your other memos or lists (or mind!)

You can also view and edit the notes in the **Notes** tab of the **Add/Edit Task** window when adding or editing tasks.

The notes are automatically saved immediately after you edit them.

Rich-text formatting is supported, so you can apply various font styles, insert images, create hyperlinks, create and edit tables, and more.

To create a hyperlink, either write or paste the URL, e.g. http://www.dextronet.com – or – select the text, right-click it, and in the popup menu, click "Hyperlink..." (shortcut: Ctrl+Alt+K)

Here are some useful keyboard shortcuts for notes editing:

- Ctrl+D Insert date and time
- **Ctrl+J** Insert separator
- **Ctrl+Alt+R** Remove all formatting from the selected text (useful after pasting information from websites or Word documents)
- Ctrl+B Bold
- Ctrl+N Bullet list
- **Ctrl+Shift+N** Numbered list
- Ctrl+Shift+> Increase text size
- Ctrl+Shift+< Decrease text size

(You can find a complete keyboard shortcut overview in the help file, or <u>on our website</u>.)

As I've mentioned earlier when I talked about Memos, **you can export and import notes to/from various formats**, including PDF (export only), MS Word docx, HTML, RTF, TXT, ePub, OpenOffice ODT, and many more. To do that, use the Export and Save buttons in the **Notes** tab:



To customize the notes, right-click anywhere in the notes area, and click **Customize** in the popup menu. This allows you to set the default notes font and colors. For instance, you can pick a larger or smaller font size, so it's pleasant for you to work with the notes.

Of course, there is more to task notes, but I just gave you the most important information, as well the most interesting non-obvious information.

Action step: Use task notes now!

Go through your tasks one by one, and for each, write your related thoughts or information into its notes. If you don't know what to write for any particular task, write the next micro-step you could take to move this task forward.

Capturing related information and thoughts for each of your tasks takes the key idea "don't store stuff in your head" to the next level!

After you do this, you will immediately feel more in control and empowered. Trust me on this one and go for it. Writing some notes for each of your tasks is easy, and well worth it.

#06 How to prioritize and plan - know what to do and when

By now, you should have all your tasks in Swift To-Do list.

But what if you want to know what to do, and when to do it?

Well, Swift To-Do List *can* tell you what to do and when to do it. All it takes for you is to start prioritizing your tasks, and learn a few basic things.

After you start prioritizing your tasks, you can also start planning using Due Dates. I will show you how to do that in a few moments.

It really pays off to learn this. Once you start prioritizing and planning your tasks, you will dramatically increase your productivity.

How to prioritize

By default, Swift To-Do List comes with these priorities:

- Highest
- High
- Medium
- Low
- Lowest

Tip: You can customize the priorities (using menu **Manage – Priorities**) and setup completely different ones. You can even have more or fewer priorities.

This is how to prioritize your tasks -

Simply set higher priorities to tasks that you want to do soon, and lower priorities to tasks that can wait.

You can edit the tasks and set the priority in the **Edit Task** window. Or, you can edit tasks in-place in the task-view, by selecting the task and then clicking inside the priority cell, as shown below:

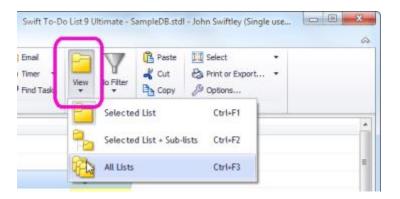
Task Name	Priority	Due Date	Flag
🗏 1: Make everyone smile	Medium	 (none) 	
	Highest		
	High		
	Mediun		
	Low		
	Lowest		

Try not to use the high priorities too much, because if everything has high priority, you can't tell what is really important. Ideally, try to have only about 5–10 high priority tasks.

Viewing your high priority tasks

By default, your tasks are sorted by priority, so you will see the high priority tasks at the top. You can click the **Priority** column any time to sort your tasks by priority.

You can use the View button in the main toolbar to view all tasks at once:



This way, you will see *all* your tasks sorted by priority.

Tip: You can also create a custom Filter which will hide all but the high-priority tasks. Creating your custom Filter is easy and fun. To do it, use menu **Manage – Filters**. In the **Manage Filters** window, click the **Add** button. Then, in the **Add Filter** window, check "**Priority**" and set the desired options.

You can then use the Filter whenever needed. It will hide all the low priority tasks, and thus make it easier for you to focus on what's important.

Advanced: Plan your today and tomorrow tasks with Due Dates

To take things to the next level, you can also start planning by choosing the tasks you will do today and tomorrow. This can dramatically increase your productivity.

To do that, simply set the Due Dates of the tasks you want to do today or tomorrow accordingly.

I recommend planning only few days in advance at the most, because things change quickly.

Again, just like with Priority, you can either edit the task and set its Due Date in the **Edit Task** window, or, you can edit it in-place in the task-view, by selecting the task, and then clicking inside its Due Date cell.

You can then sort your tasks first by **Due Date**, second by **Priority**. To do that, click the **Due Date** column. Then, hold the **Ctrl** key, and click the **Priority** column:

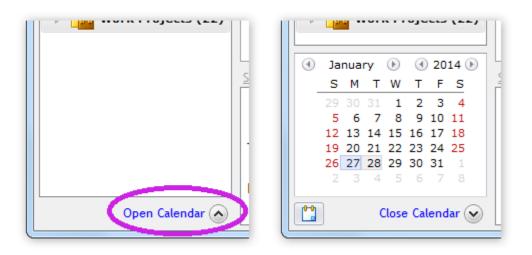
Task Name	Priority	Due Date	Flags
Get things under control	Highest	6/10/2013	E02
Finish the Q3 report	Medium	6/10/2013	E02
Call John about the proposal	High	6/11/2013	E02

This way, you will see the tasks you want to do *today* sorted by Priority, followed by the tasks you want to do *tomorrow* sorted by Priority, etc.

By the way, the **calendar panel** below the tree acts as a quick date-filter.

So, to quickly view tasks you planned for today, simply click on the "**Open calendar**" link below the to-do list tree. That will display only tasks due today (in 1 click).

See the following screenshot:



You can then select tomorrow's date, or yesterday's date in the calendar, to view tasks for these dates. You can even select multiple dates (with mouse, or using **Ctrl+click**).

Finally, close the calendar to see all tasks in your to-do list again, and not only the tasks due on the date(s) selected in the calendar.

Tip #1: Expired (yesterday) Due Dates can be automatically set to today's date. To set it up, use menu **File – Options**. In the **Options** window, go to the **Task–View** section, and in the **Behavior** frame, check "**Roll–over Due Dates**".

Tip #2: You can Drag and Drop task onto a date in the calendar to set its Due Date to that date. Use this to quickly re-assign today's tasks to tomorrow, etc.

Prioritizing is one of the best things you can do to increase your productivity and to get things done.

It's actually easier than it might look at first. Take the time to learn this - it's really worth it. Once you start using it, you will soon do it automatically, like a pro.

#07 Checking your to-do list

Besides writing tasks down as they come to you and keeping your tasks in one place, there is a final third key habit you need to cultivate to be successful.

This is the habit of checking your to-do list at the right times. Specifically, there are two vital times when you need to check your to-do list:

- 1. You need to look at your to-do list at the start of your day.
- 2. You need to look at your to-do list whenever you finish a task, so you can mark it as complete and see what's next.

This illustration sums it up nicely:



Once you start checking your to-do list at the right times, you will become more efficient and productive. Having a crystal-clear picture of your tasks is a great advantage.

So - this is what you need to start doing:

At the start of the day, always look into Swift To-Do List to see what's next. You might want to reorder your tasks, or set priorities, too, so you can do them in the given order.

Whenever you finish a task, open Swift To-Do List to mark the task as complete and to see what's next. Remember, you can open Swift To-Do List using the global hotkey Ctrl+Alt+S.

Finally, to help you develop these habits so you actually do them, place either a physical post-it note or a Swift To-Do List "Sticky Note" on your computer screen that says "Check to-do list". Create the post-it note now – it will take you just 30 seconds to create one.

It sounds simple enough, but without creating a reminder (e.g. the post-it note), it might be quite challenging to remember to do those things. That's why you should create some physical reminder.

#08 Create tasks from emails to save time

Most of my tasks come via email. How about you? I bet you receive a lot of tasks via email as well.

Email is probably the biggest source of tasks in our lives.

With Swift To-Do List, you can save many hours of time, because it gives you an easy and quick way to create tasks from emails.

You can just Drag and Drop emails into Swift To-Do List to create tasks from them. It works with most desktop email clients (Outlook, Thunderbird, Windows Live Mail, Lotus Notes, The Bat, Eudora, and others.)

It gets better! When you Drag and Drop email into Swift To-Do List, the email subject is used as the task name, the whole email body is inserted into the task notes (all formatting is preserved), and the email attachments are added as task attachments. And, the actual email message is also added as task attachment, so you can easily open it and reply to it at any point!

Once you try this, you will never want to go back. This feature will save you many hours of time.

You can even Drag and Drop multiple email messages at once.

Just drop the email(s) either into the task-view, or on a to-do list in the to-do list tree panel on the left.

You can also Drag and Drop email into notes of some particular task, if you want to attach it to an existing task.

(Note: Web-based email, such as Gmail, doesn't support Drag and Drop. But you can simply Copy and Paste the email subject into Swift To-Do List, then Copy and Paste the email body into task notes. Or, you can export the message from Gmail into .eml file, then Drag and Drop this file into Swift To-Do List - this will include attachments, etc.)

- • ×

This feature was one of the reasons that Janet Barclay, a professional organizer for over 11 years, declared Swift To-Do List to be the "absolute best to-do list software for Windows" on her popular blog. This is how she concludes her review: "with my increase in productivity, the software has already paid for itself."

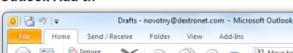
Outlook Add-In

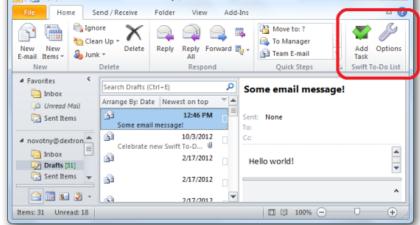
Swift To-Do List Outlook Add-In makes it even faster

Swift To-Do List comes with an Outlook Add-In, which allows you to create tasks from emails with just a single click:

You can also right-click any email and click "Add Task".

The lower Swift To-Do List editions allow you to try this Outlook Add-In too, with a limit of 20 emails.





Create a task from email yourself - right now

If you use a desktop email client (such as Outlook, Mozilla Thunderbird, Lotus notes, etc.), try this feature right now:

- 1. Open your email client
- 2. Using your mouse, start dragging an email message
- Drop it onto a to-do list (in the tree) in Swift To-Do List (or into the task-view) 3.

(If Swift To-Do List window is not visible, hold the mouse over the Swift To-Do List icon in the taskbar when dragging the email message, until Swift To-Do List comes up, and then drop it onto a to-do list in the tree in Swift To-Do List.)

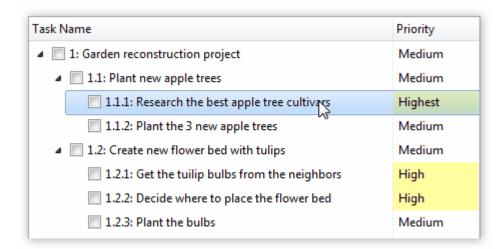
Our blog has a quick video demo (in middle of the page).

Another benefit of creating tasks from emails is that you can have all the tasks in Swift To-Do List, and at the same time, keep your email inbox at zero unread messages.

#09 How to handle complex tasks and enjoy work more

Let me show you how to handle complex tasks, enjoy work more, track your progress and stop procrastinating even on the most complex and daunting tasks.

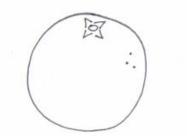
All thanks to **Subtasks** – another great Swift To-Do List feature:



With subtasks, you can break down complex tasks into easily manageable chunks.

The big, intimidating tasks will suddenly seem like small cute puppies that you can easily handle. It will be much easier to get started and get them done, because a small next action step will be always right in front of you.

I think the following pictures illustrate this quite nicely (they are from my <u>Swift Mind</u> <u>Freedom</u> book):



A COMPLEX TASK is LIKE AN UNPEELED ORANGE ...



... SO BREAK IT DOWN INTO SUBTASKS

Here is another fun one:



Once you start using subtasks, you will also **enjoy your work more, as you will clearly see the progress you are making.**

This is very important! Endless "death march" projects that go on and on with no end in sight can be very discouraging.

If you have just one big task, it can become de-motivating when it's sitting unfinished on your list for a long time, even if you work hard on it for many days.

However, if such a big task is broken down into multiple subtasks, you will be able to regularly mark some of the subtasks as done, and see your accomplishments clearly... and thus enjoy your work more.

Especially with complex tasks, it really helps to break them down into small specific subtasks, so you don't miss or forget anything important.

How do subtasks work?

Subtasks are exactly the same as regular tasks. The only difference is that they are located "under" another task. They are the steps necessary for completing their parent task.

With subtasks, you can to create task hierarchy in the task-view.

For example, you can have a task "Build a house", with subtasks "Get building permission", "Build the foundation", "Build the walls", "Build the roof", etc.

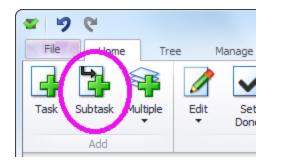
Each subtask can also have its own subtasks. The "depth" is not limited.

Having one huge task "Build a house" is almost useless, but creating a clear task hierarchy using subtasks under such task can be extremely useful, as it empowers you to take action and allows you to track progress.

How to create subtasks

Creating subtasks is easy and intuitive. They can be created many ways.

You can create subtasks by clicking the **Add Subtask** button in the main toolbar, or using menu **Tasks – Add Subtask**. Just make sure that you select the desired parent task first. The subtask will be added under the currently selected task.



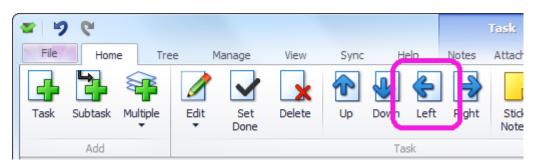
Other ways of adding subtasks include:

- You can use keyboard shortcut **Ctrl** + **M** to add a subtask under the currently selected task.
- You can right-click any task, then select "Add Subtask..." in the popup menu.
- To add multiple subtasks at once, use the dropdown part of the Multiple button (Ctrl+`), or right-click a task, then click Add Multiple Subtasks. Press the F1 key in the Add Multiple Subtasks window to learn how this works.
- You can also simply Drag and Drop (using your mouse) any existing tasks onto another task to move them under that particular task and turn them into subtasks.

When you are dropping a task onto another one, the target task will become highlighted and the insertion marker (used for task reordering) will momentarily disappear.

 Another way to create subtasks from existing tasks is to use the Move Right button in the main toolbar, or using keyboard shortcut Alt + Right.

Finally, to turn a subtask into a top-level task again, either simply Drag and Drop it to a top-level position, or select it, and press the **Move Left** button in the main toolbar (**Alt+Left** arrow):



Create a subtask now

Try this right now - go create a subtask:

- 1. Select some big task in your to-do list
- 2. Click the Add Subtask button in the toolbar (or press Ctrl+M)
- 3. Input some action necessary for completing the "parent" task
- 4. Add the subtask

It's really simple, isn't it?

Now do the same for more tasks. And try adding multiple tasks at once, too - just rightclick a task, select **Add Multiple Subtasks**, then enter one subtask per line.

Try to make the subtasks small, so you can finish each in about 20-90 minutes. You might want to break the subtasks into additional subtasks to make them even smaller.

#10 How to organize your tasks better

Having all your tasks in Swift To-Do List is great. However, inside Swift To-Do List, having all your tasks in a single to-do list usually isn't optimal.

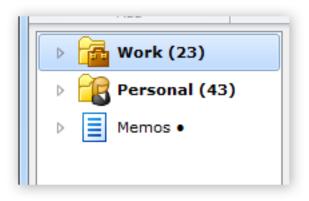
You can create as many to-do lists as you need in the tree panel. You might have already created several to-do lists - in that case, use the following information for inspiration.

First, I will show you how you can separate your personal and work tasks, and how to divide your work tasks into several to-do lists by their areas or projects.

Then, I will show you how you can view tasks from multiple to-do lists at once.

Separating Work and Personal tasks

Let's create two new top-level to-do lists, "Work" and "Personal" and then divide all your existing tasks among them.



Here are the steps to separate your personal and work tasks:

- 1. Use menu Tree Add To-Do List to create a new to-do list named "Personal".
- 2. Use menu Tree Add To-Do List to create a new to-do list named "Work".
- 3. Click your current to-do list (where your tasks are) to view it, and Drag and Drop each personal task to the new "Personal" to-do list, and each work-related task to the new "Work" to-do list. Dragging and Dropping tasks works the same as when you move files to a folder in Windows. If you don't know how to do this, <u>here is a video</u> (moving

tasks to a different to-do list is shown in about halfway the video). You can also **Cut** and **Paste** the tasks instead of using Drag and Drop.

4. Finally, if your current to-do list is empty now, you might want to delete it (right-click it, and select **Delete**), so you have just the two new lists - "Work" and "Personal".

Congratulations! You've successfully separated your personal and work tasks.

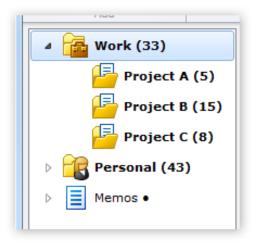
Organizing your Work tasks by areas or projects

Let's organize your work tasks better now, and setup several to-do lists based on areas/projects.

- When it comes to your work tasks, ask yourself: What are the 3-5 main areas (or projects)?
- For each area/project where it makes sense to you, create a new sub-to-do-list under the "Work" to-do list. To do that, right-click the "Work" to-do list and click Add Sub To-Do List in the popup menu. Name each new sub-to-do list based on the area or project (e.g. "Presentations", "Reports", "Marketing", "Clients", "Project Omega", etc.)
- 3. Move tasks that belong to a certain area/project to their new to-do list. Again, you can use Drag and Drop and your mouse, or **Cut** and **Paste**.

Tip: You can also Drag and Drop the actual to-do lists and memos around the tree using your mouse too, to re-order and organize them.

The result might look like this:



Viewing tasks from multiple lists at once

Sometimes, it is useful to view all tasks at once, so you can get a big picture perspective.

Now, if you need to view all tasks at once, you can click the big **View** button in the **Home** tab, and select **All Lists**:

Swift To-Do	o List 9 Ult	timate - S	ampleDB.stdl	- John Swiftley (Sir	ngle use	x
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] Email	Pa	∇	🔁 Paste	🛄 Select	•	
Timer	View	u Io Filter	or Cut	Print or Export	· •	
) Find Task	*	▼	Сору	🖉 Options		
		Selecter	d List	Ctrl+F1		
		Selecte	d List + Sub-l	ists Ctrl+F2		
		All Lists		Ctrl+F3		=
					-	

To view only the selected to-do list again, press the **View** button again, and click **Selected To-Do List**.

Here's a really useful thing -

If you want to view all your work-related tasks, you can select the Work to-do list in the tree, and then, click the **View** button and click **Selected List + Sub-lists**. This will display all tasks from the Work to-do list, and also all tasks from all its sub-lists.

So now you can view only one particular to-do list, or all tasks at once, or only work-related tasks, or only personal tasks. Pretty cool, isn't it?

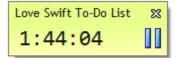
By the way, if you have a lot of tasks, play with the **Filter** button which is right beside the **View** button. The filter feature allows you to display only a specific kind of tasks based on defined criteria (for example, only High priority tasks, or only tasks due today, etc).

Using menu **Manage** – **Filters**, you can customize any of the preset filters, or create your entirely own filters. It's very easy.

#11 How to focus better and beat procrastination

If you sometimes need to focus better (manage your attention), or struggle with procrastination (resistance to work), the <u>timer feature</u> in Swift To-Do List can be very useful to you.

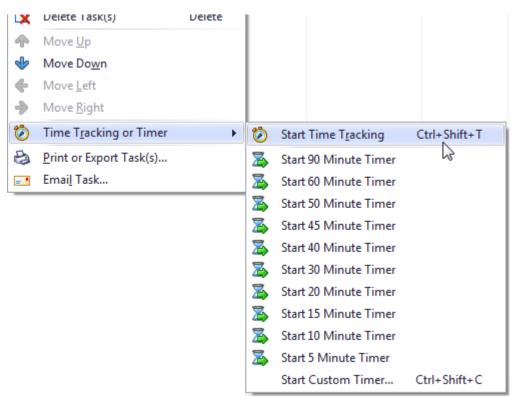
You can also use it to track total time spent on any task.



You can use it in two modes:

- In time tracking mode, to track time spent working on a task.
- In countdown mode, to allocate certain time to a task.

Simply right-click any task, then under the **Time Tracking or Timer** menu, click **Start Time Tracking**. You can also use the **Tasks** menu to do the same.



As you can see, the menu also lists many countdown options below the first **Start Time Tracking** option.

For example, if you click "**Start 60 Minute Timer**", it will start a countdown timer from 60 minutes. Once the time is up, Swift To-Do List will play a sound and the floating timer window will start blinking.

How to focus better and beat procrastination

Procrastination is caused by resistance. We feel resistance to tasks because a part of our brain is feeling threatened. It's afraid of the work, because it's uncertain how long will it take or what else will we have to give up to finish it. However, this feeling can be eliminated by setting a time limit on our work session.

For example, to overcome resistance to any particular task, you can say to yourself: "I am going to work just 5 minutes on this task". Then, start the 5 Minute Timer for that task. You will have no problem getting started this way.

This has very significant benefits:

- First, it eliminates resistance, because it is now obvious that you will be working for just 5 minutes, so the task is no longer perceived as a "threat" by your brain.
- Second, it sets you free. During the countdown, you don't have to worry about anything else. It frees you from everything else and gives you the permission to focus absolutely on that task.
- Since you know your time is limited, you will work faster than usual.
- Once the 5 minutes have passed, you will probably want to continue working. You will get into flow and feel good about working!
- The floating timer window will constantly keep returning your attention to the task. It acts like a magnet for your focus, which is invaluable in today's world full of distractions.

As a result, you can easily be 300% more efficient during these 5 minutes than usual.

I always get great results when using a timer, and I know that others do too. It's proven and very, very effective.

5 minutes is just an example. You can use any time limit, e.g. 10 minutes, 20, 30, 60, 90 - or any other number.

Try experimenting with various limits, to see which one works best for you.

Try using a timer to get started on a task right now Let's try this in practice, shall we?

- 1. Pick a task you feel resistance to, perhaps a difficult task you've been procrastinating on.
- 2. Right-click that task, and start a 5 Minute Timer under the Timer or Time Tracking option in the popup menu.
- 3. Work on the task to make as much progress as possible, until the time is up.

Note: If the task is complex, then consider breaking it down into subtasks first, and starting the timer on the first subtask instead.

#12 How to keep your to-do list short

We will add another task management super-power to your arsenal: The **Hide Until** field. It's like a "snooze" button for your tasks.

One of the top reasons why most people eventually stop using to-do lists is that their lists become too long.

All to-do lists tend to grow endlessly over time, and end up with many tasks that are not important right now.

Here's the secret: If you start hiding such tasks until later, your to-do lists will be shorter and much more useful.

The **Hide Until** field allows you to hide tasks for later. It's like a "snooze" button for your tasks. By setting the **Hide Until** date of a task, you can hide it until certain date. Then, when the "Hide Until" date arrives, the task will appear on your to-do list again.

Short lists are much more motivating and fun to work with. They also help you to focus on what's important.

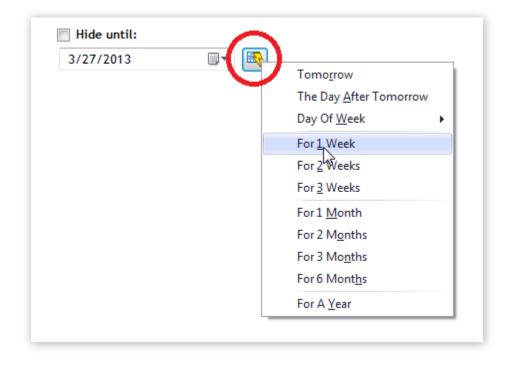
How to use the Hide Until field

To hide a task until later, simply edit it, and in the Edit Task window, set the Hide Until date:

dd Task					×			
Add Task All fields are optional. Add new task t <u>o</u> this list: C								
Task	Reminder N	lotes	Attachments	Recurrence				
Na <u>m</u> e:								
Enter	the task nam	ne here						
<u>P</u> riority	y:			Due dat	e:			
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Show or hide fields								
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(If the **Hide Until** field editor is not visible, click "**Show or hide fields**" in the bottom-right corner of the **Edit Task** window, and enable the **Hide Until** field editor.)

You can use the quick date preset button upon the **Hide Until** date selector to quickly hide task for a day, week, month or a year:



One tip: Do not use Hide Until for tasks that you don't want to do at all. It is better to archive such tasks by deleting them, or to move them to a different list (perhaps called "Future/Ideas").

If you want to view the hidden tasks, just toggle the menu View - Disable "Hide Until".

How to hide multiple tasks at once

First, select the tasks you want to hide until later. (You can hold the Ctrl key and click on a task to add it to the selection.)

Then, right click any of the tasks, and in the popup menu, choose **Batch Edit**, then **Hide Until**.

Keeping everything out of head vs. short lists

On one hand, you want everything written down, so you can keep your head empty.

But on the other hand, would you get more important things done if you had just handful of tasks on your to-do list to focus on? Probably yes.

... and the **Hide Until** field is the solution! You can put all the tasks on your to-do list, and still keep your list short. Just hide the tasks not relevant right now for later.

Action Step: Hide tasks for later now

Let's make your to-do list shorter and more useful! I want you to do this -

Go through all your tasks.

For each task:

- If you don't want to do the task at all, delete it, or move it to a separate to-do list called "Future". (Use menu Tree - Add To-Do List to create a new to-do list. You can then Drag and Drop tasks onto it from your other to-do lists.)
- 2. If you want to do the task in the near future, keep it as it is.
- 3. If you want to do the task, but not in the near future, edit the task, and set its **Hide Until** date to a day when you want it to appear on your to-do list again.

Congratulations! Your to-do list is now much shorter and more useful.

Remember that the **Hide Until** field is like a snooze button for your tasks. If you ever you feel overwhelmed, you can hide some tasks for later, and/or use the **Filter** feature.

#13 Mobile apps, sync, sharing

You might have been wondering:

- Is there a mobile app for Android or iPhone?
- Can you sync your database across computers?
- Can you share your tasks with others?
- Can you access your database from the web?

And the answer is - YES!

With the Secure Sync feature, you can:

- Access your tasks from the web, from any computer (including Mac and Linux)
- Access your tasks from mobile devices (using iOS and Android apps)
- Sync your tasks and notes
- Share your database with others

To take advantage of this functionality, make sure that you have the latest Swift To-Do List (which can be <u>downloaded</u> from our website), then click the **Sync** button in the **Sync** tab to get started.

Create your Swift To-Do List Account in the Secure Sync Wizard and you are good to go!

The Secure Sync features come with 30-day trial, then require a valid subscription plan.

#14 Six common problems and how to solve them

Have you run into any problems so far? Don't worry, we can solve anything!

Let's look at some common problems, and what we can do about them -

(Remember that you can <u>contact us</u> and ask for help, too!)

1. "I just have no time to set Swift To-Do List up"

If you feel that you have no time to get started with Swift To-Do List, I understand. But you need to realize that this is a trap you simply must escape.

In fact, the more busy you are, the more you need to get started! Until you start using Swift To-Do List, you will remain stuck in your current "busy trap".

Getting started with Swift To-Do List is very easy and fast. You can do it in just 5 minutes, literally.

Simply click the **Multiple** button to open the **Add Multiple Tasks** window (or, press **Ctrl+H**) and input all that's currently on your mind, one task per line.

And that's it! By taking just this one simple step, you will feel better immediately. Then, gradually put all your other tasks into Swift To-Do List so they are all there, and develop the habit of putting everything new into Swift To-Do List as well.

Anyone can do this.

2. "I have problem prioritizing my tasks"

Prioritizing tasks can be tricky.

The default priorities (Highest, High, Medium, Low, Lowest) might not work for everybody. If that's your case, the easiest solution is to customize the priorities, so they make sense to you and your situation. Use menu **Manage – Priorities**, and define your custom priorities – as many as you need.

When creating your custom priorities, consider whether prioritize your tasks by urgency, by importance, or by both. I recommend that you have a way of prioritizing urgent tasks, because these can cause you the most stress when not kept under control.

If you need a well thought-out prioritizing system, you might want to get my <u>Swift Mind</u> <u>Freedom</u> e-book. It describes in detail an urgency-based prioritizing system, and shows you exactly how to use it in Swift To-Do List.

The priorities used in the Swift Mind Freedom method are:

- Urgent
- Current Focus
- Do Soon
- Do Later
- Info/Maybe

3. "I have problems with procrastination"

Two questions for you -

1) **Did you break down your biggest task into small subtasks?** – Just select the task, and add subtask for each step needed for finish the task. You can use menu **Task** – **Add Multiple Subtasks** to do this. Focus especially on the next smallest step you need to take now.

2) Have you used the countdown timer technique? – Right-click the task, and start a 5 minute timer, then make as much progress on it as possible until the time runs out.

If procrastination is a recurring theme in your life, read my <u>summary of the book The Now</u> <u>Habit</u>, which is probably the best book on procrastination out there.

This should do the trick. If you still have trouble, please contact me, I will be happy to give you some other tips and advanced information.

4. "I feel overwhelmed"

Overwhelm happens when you either don't consolidate all your tasks into Swift To-Do List, or, when they are not organized sufficiently inside Swift To-Do List.

In the first case, you really need to put all your tasks into Swift To-Do List. It's described in the "<u>How to consolidate your to-do lists chapter</u>".

In the second case, you need to make your list shorter. In Swift To-Do List, create several new to-do lists for specific categories of your tasks, and move such tasks into them. Then use the <u>Hide Until field</u> on the remaining tasks to hide tasks which are irrelevant for now. This should result in a nice, short to-do list.

Finally, look at the available **Filters** – could you use one of them? You can also create your own custom filter, using menu **Manage** – **Filters**. It's quite easy.

5. "I can't get anything done"

If you can't get anything done, it is likely because of interruptions and distractions.

Julie Morgenstern put it this way:

According to a study published by Cubesmart, Inc, we experience on average, one interruption every 8 minutes. Most interruptions take approximately 5–15 minutes. If you receive 50 interruptions daily and each takes 10 minutes, that totals 500 minutes, which is 8 hours per day.

Ouch!.. no wonder you feel the need to work 12 hours per day: 8 handling interruptions, and 4 getting your work done after hours.

So – the question is – how can you eliminate interruptions and distractions, both from people and technology, so you can finally focus? To get started, disable all popups and notifications, and set some boundaries with your co-workers.

6. "I can't sleep. I keep thinking about work."

<u>This happens when you don't keep your head empty</u>, and use it to store your tasks and thoughts.

To keep your head empty and mind clear, you simply need to write everything that's on your mind into Swift To-Do List. Capture all tasks, and enter all related thoughts to their notes. Other thoughts, not related to any particular task, can be put into <u>Memos</u>.

#15 How to have more power when managing your work

Do you sometimes feel that you have too much tasks on your plate?

Do new tasks keep popping up on your to-do list, up to the point that you can't give the truly important tasks the attention they deserve?

I had the same problem. And I realized that the solution is not to simply "work more" so I can do it all. That would be treating the symptoms, not the cause.

I realized -

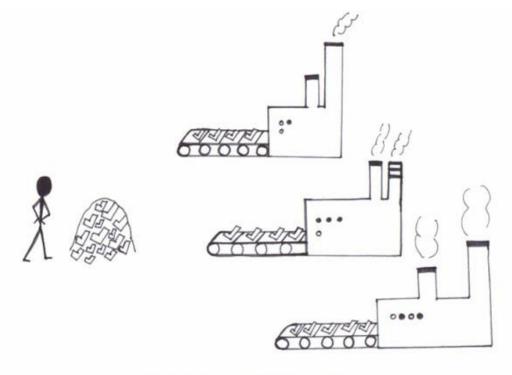
All the tasks on our to-do list are there because of certain commitments we've made to ourselves or to others.

It's the commitments that keep putting tasks into your to-do list. Behind every task, there is some commitment.

Commitments have various forms - jobs, projects, roles, goals, promises, deals, agreements, etc.

Sometimes, some of our commitments no longer work for us, and we should remove them from our life.

Commitments are like "task factories" that keep manufacturing and putting new tasks onto your to-do list. If one such factory is creating tasks you don't want to do or that feel like a distraction from the "real" work, you need to shut that "task factory" down. In other words, you need to re-negotiate, reduce or drop that commitment



YOU NEED TO MANAGE THE TASK FACTORIES IN YOUR LIFE OR YOU BECOME OVERBURDENED

I find it useful to keep a list of commitments in a Memo inside Swift To-Do List. I occasionally review it and think about dropping some of the commitments.

Also, I am very wary of taking on any new commitments, because it always means allocating less time and energy to my existing commitments.

You can do the same: Create a new memo in Swift To-Do List (using menu **Tree - Add Memo**), and list all your current commitments into it. Consider dropping some of them - it will allow you to invest more time and energy into the truly important ones.

Then, whenever you want to take on any new commitment, look at your list of commitments to get the complete perspective. This will help you to manage your work and high-level priorities more efficiently... and ultimately, you will be more successful in your work and avoid failing due to overload and dispersed focus.

Think about it.

#16 Task attachments

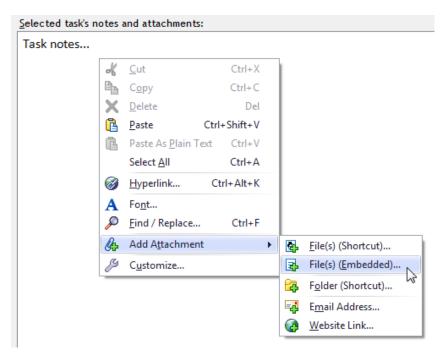
As you might've already discovered, Swift To-Do List allows you to add attachments to tasks. You can attach:

- Files (shortcuts)
- Files (embedded in the database)
- Folder shortcuts
- Links
- Email addresses
- Email messages

Attachments allow you to keep related files and folders handy.

To add an attachment, edit the task, and in the **Edit Task** window, go to the **Attachments** tab. You can then use **the Add Attachment** button, or, just Drag and Drop files inside the attachments area.

You can also add attachments in the main Swift To-Do List window. Select the task, then simply Drag and Drop files into the notes panel on the bottom, or, right-click the notes area, and select "Add Attachment" in the popup menu, as shown below:



You can also use the **Attachments** tab in the ribbon.

After you add one or more attachments, they will be shown next to the notes area of the task. You can launch any of the attachments by double-clicking it.

You can also right-click any of the attachments to display available options (cut, copy, delete, rename, open location, etc.)

What are embedded attachments? You can attach files in two ways:

- 1. As "shortcut" attachments
- 2. As "embedded" attachments

With embedded attachments, the files are copied and stored directly in the Swift To-Do List database. That way, even if you remove the original file, or copy the database to another computer, you won't lose the attached file.

Options window allows you, in the **Attachments** section, to customize what happens when you Drag and Drop a file into Swift To-Do List as an attachment: Whether to make it a shortcut, embed it, or ask you.

You can convert any file shortcut attachment to an embedded attachment by right-clicking it, and selecting **Make embedded** in the popup menu.

When you open an embedded attachment, it's extracted to a temporary location and launched from there. If you edit it, Swift To-Do List will ask you if you want to bring the changes back to the database.

#17 Customizing fields

Today, you will learn how you can customize Swift To-Do List to suit you and your situation.

Have you noticed that Swift To-Do List allows you to customize which fields you use?

Swift To-Do List has many inbuilt editable fields:

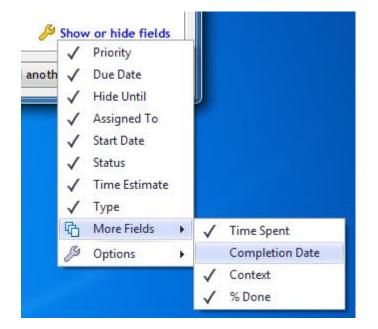
- Priority
- Due Date
- Type
- Assigned To
- Hide Until
- Completion date
- Context
- Percent Done
- Start Date
- Time Estimate
- Time Spent
- Status

It's completely up to you to choose which fields you want to use.

To customize the editors you want to use, click the **Show or hide fields label** at the bottom of the **Add Task** or **Edit Task** window, as shown on the screenshot on the right.

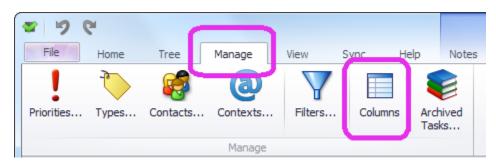
Add Task						
4	Add T		e currently sele	ected to-do list. All fields are optional.		
Task	Reminder	Notes	Attachments	Recurrence		
Name: Assigned To: Start date: Myself Status: Time spent: In progress (In progress) (In p						
				Show or hide <u>f</u> ields		
			ОК	O <u>K</u> , add another Cancel		

By enabling and disabling fields, you can customize Swift To-Do List to suit your needs. You can use any imaginable combination/setup. And, you can change your mind anytime.



Customize columns displayed in the task-view

Additionally, Swift To-Do List has many extra columns that can be displayed in the taskview. To show or hide columns, use menu **Manage – Columns**. There is a column for every editable field, of course, but there are also many extra useful columns (like Creation Date, Changed Date, Reminder, Recurrence, and more.)



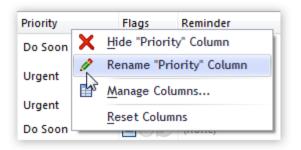
Rename fields and columns

You can even rename any of the fields or columns! This allows you to somewhat re-purpose them.

For example, if you don't use the **Context** or **Type** field, you can rename it to something else and use it for that instead. You could rename it to **Supervisor**, or **Client**, or **Location**, or **Goal**, or anything else that you want.

Likewise, if you don't need the **Due Date** or **Start Date** field, again, you can rename them to something else – for example, **Shipment Date** or **Delivery Date** or **Last Contacted Date**.

You can use menu **Manage – Columns**, and in the **Manage Columns** window, select any column, then click the **Rename** button and pick a new name for it. Or, you can simply right-click any column in the task-view, and then click **Rename**.



#18 Editing tasks in-place

Did you know you can edit tasks in-place?

Task Name	Priority	Due Date	Flag
🔲 1: Make everyone smile	Medium	(none)	
	Highest		
	High		
	Mediun		
	Low		
	Lowest		

First, select the task. Second, click inside the cell you want to edit. That's it!

In the screenshot above, I selected the task, then clicked on "Medium" inside the Priority column, and it opened the priority picker as shown.

You can edit all columns that are not read-only. So, for example, you can edit **Due Date**, **Task Name**, etc.

(Optionally, you can also enable single-click editing without the need to select the task first. You can do so in **Options**, in the **Task-View** section.)

By pressing the F2 key after you select a task, you can edit its Task Name in-place without opening the Edit Task window.

#19 How to make your to-do list more empowering for action

I have a quick, yet powerful tip for you. Once you apply it, your to-do lists will empower you to take more action.

Use actionable, specific task names.

Actionable task names contain an action – a **verb**. Specific task names tell you **exactly** what action to do.

Take the little extra effort to name your tasks correctly. A much more useful to-do list will be your reward.

After you start doing this, you will be soon writing your tasks down the right way automatically.

Remember: It is much harder to get going when the task names are not actionable and not specific.

For example: "*Chair*" is not a good task name, but "*Order online 5 new caster for my office chair*" is much better. It tells you exactly what needs to be done. Here are some more examples:

Bad Task Name	Good Task Name
Jim	Call Jim and ask about the quote
Paper	Finish summarizing the white paper for Peter
Chair	Order online 5 new caster wheels for my office chair
Annual meeting	Prepare my presentation for the annual meeting
Letters	Sign and mail the letters to our 5 VIP partners

Here is what you can do right now to put this into practice:

- 1. Go through all tasks on your to-do list
- 2. Edit each task, and give it a new ACTIONABLE and SPECIFIC task name

You will feel the difference immediately.

#20 Swift To-Do List license policy and purchasing

Let me quickly tell you how the Swift To-Do List licensing works, so you know what you are eligible for after you <u>purchase a Swift To-Do List</u> plan.

What you get by purchasing Swift To-Do List 9

- Swift To-Do List 9 license that you can keep using forever. Plus, if you ever lose your license code, we will resend it to you for free, at any point in the future.
- Use of Swift To-Do List on unlimited no. of devices
- Secure Sync with team features
- Secure Cloud Backup
- Mobile and tablet apps for iOS and Android
- Web-app to access your tasks from computers where Swift To-Do List is not installed
- 1 year of updates with new features and improvements
- Excellent 24/7 support service, with 24-hour or faster reply
- 100% 90-Day Guarantee. If you won't be amazingly happy with your purchase, we will promptly refund you the full amount, no hassles.
- Immediate delivery and Volume discounts

100% safe and risk-free purchasing

Purchasing from our store is absolutely safe and secure. All purchases are processed by our trusted e-commerce partner BMT Micro, a USA-based company established in 1997 that has processed millions of payments.

Additionally, our **100% 90-day Guarantee** gives you absolute protection when purchasing Swift To-Do List. It's quite simple – if you are not amazingly happy, we do not want to keep your money, and will refund you the full amount, no hassles.

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#21 Resources and further study

This e-book has provided you with basic information about Swift To-Do List and how to start using it to control, manage and accomplish your tasks. You now have some very powerful tools and ideas in your toolkit.

For more information and advanced study, I recommend my e-book <u>Swift Mind Freedom</u>. It covers the ideas you've learned here in more depth, and it also contains additional ideas, techniques and practical information.

For latest updates, follow us on <u>Facebook</u>, <u>Google+</u> or <u>twitter</u>.

You can also check out our blog at www.dextronet.com/blog

Here is a printable cheat-sheet: Download it as PDF or as editable MS Word file.

If you have any questions at all, don't hesitate to contact me and my team at support@dextronet.com

Take care! I wish you tremendous success with Swift To-Do List.

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PS: Please feel free to share this e-book with your colleagues and friends that could benefit from it.

Or, send them link to our website – <u>www.dextronet.com</u> – and instruct them to enter their email address when downloading Swift To-Do List, to receive the original email course. It is usually more efficient and convenient way to study for most busy people.