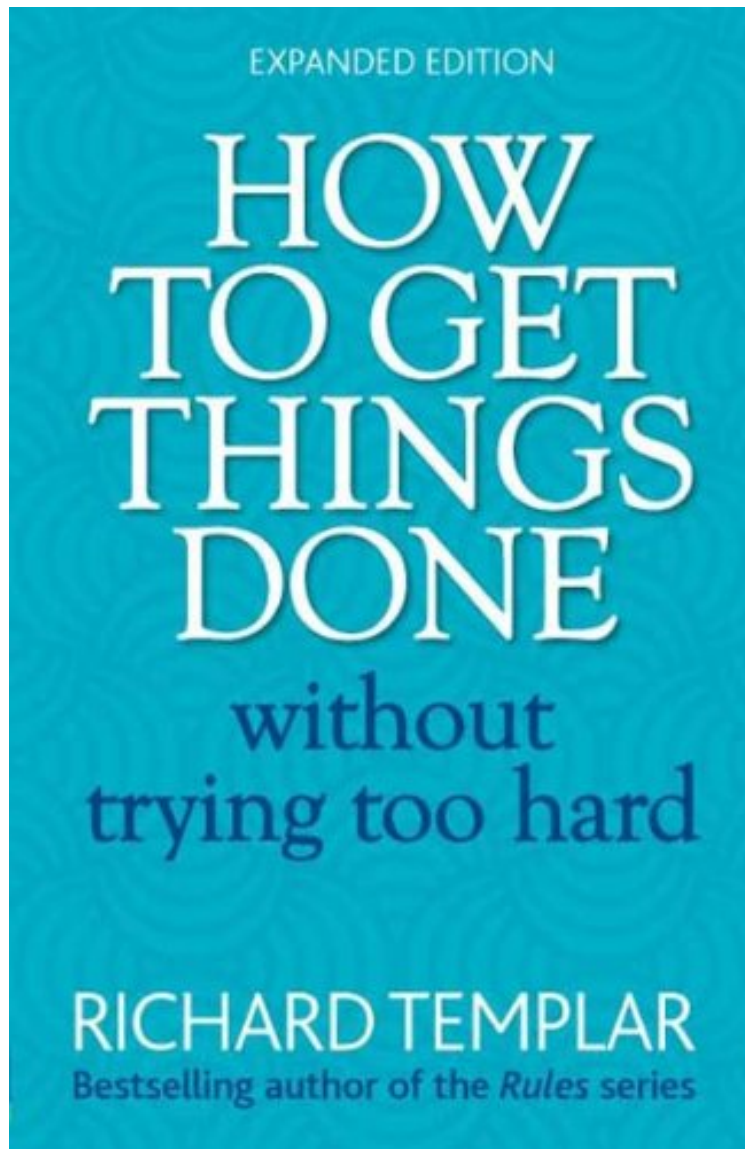


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How to Get Things Done Without Trying Too Hard 2e

Richard Templar

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Richard Templar : How to Get Things Done Without Trying Too Hard 2e before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised How to Get Things Done Without Trying Too Hard 2e:

1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. don't waste your breadBy The Masked PotatoToo much common sense stuff I knew already. No magic bullet. Some of his other books are OK, but you can live without this one.2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. All fluff!By Gary OrmanI feel like an idiot. I bought this book from a bookstore and so had plenty of opportunity to read through the book before buying it. The format was seductive. The left page is a giant title heading, a useful-to-remember sound bite, such as "Do the scary jobs" or "File your week".

The right-hand page consisted of the detailed commentary. I've been looking around for books or advice that works to help me with my time-management (lack of) and procrastination, so this seemed like a good book. As soon as I got home, I read through the book, diligently highlighting the important points. A lot of it seemed to make sense. A lot of it I was already doing anyway. A lot of seemed obvious, but maybe worth spelling out so that I could implement the practical advice in real life. But then a lot of it seemed to be nonsense. I worked diligently through the whole book and then went back to review. Here's what I discovered. "You have to want to be organised" (it's a British author, so British spelling). Okay... that's kind of insightful I suppose. But I'm not sure it's so helpful. If we *want* to be successful then it goes with the territory that we *have to* be organized. But then there are some successful people who are not organized... and they usually have other people to organize their lives for them. "Quality of life" is the key. Do the things you *enjoy* doing. Okay... that's kind of why I want to organize my time better. But it's also why I want to crack the procrastination issue: I want to be able to enjoy what I'm doing, or at least figure out a way to do just the things I enjoy and get other people to do the stuff I don't enjoy. "Have a routine". Easier said than done. And I'm not sure entirely relevant. I work from home and have home-schooled kids. My life is far from routine. I give seminars and workshops 3-4 times per year, so my work/life is kind of seasonal. I probably need more than one page on how to go about developing a routine - and dealing with all the non-routine aspects of my work and life. "Don't get distracted" - duhh. Isn't that what "procrastination" is? I know when I'm distracted. I'm distracted right now, writing this review. Just telling me not to do it doesn't solve the problem. "Do it little and often" - that's a useful trick, and I do exactly that when I can. It means that a 10-hour project eventually gets done over a month if I force myself to do half-an-hour a day. It'll never get done if I try to set aside two lots of 5 hours over two days, say. "Do the scary jobs" - all the time-management books say this. Easier said than done. Saying that, I've just come across a great little article that explains exactly how to do this: focus on your mornings. Switch off phones and Skype and Twitter and don't look at your emails until after lunch. My writer friends mostly have the same strategy: they tend to write from 7am till late morning or noon every day. And then go out and relax... "Invest now, save later" / "File your week" / "Have a place for it" is all about producing a decent filing system so that you can find things when you need them. I already know this. If I can't find what I'm looking for (even something as simple as stamps to post a letter) then it may take me a good hour or two to get started, or might not even get done at all - like posting back my self-assessment tax returns and then getting fined pound;100 for not doing it... btw, now I do it online and it's done in no time!). "Don't do too much" - I think this is the root cause of time-MISmanagement and procrastination. Doesn't solve the problem, though. I *like* to do too much because there's so much I want to do. I think I need a whole book on how to decide exactly what's important in life and what I should regretfully leave out of my life. I didn't study music at university because I was already pursuing a 3-major B.Sc. degree. Now I regret this and I'm trying to make up for it by teaching myself. I have no time to be attending a music college for formal studies. Maybe I should have tried to pack in the music studies as well, who knows? I still managed to spend 4 hours a day practising the piano, despite my other studies. What I didn't know was that I was wasting those 4 hours not studying *effectively*. I've now learnt to practice in a highly focused manner for no more than 20 minutes at a time and I achieve more in those 20 minutes than several weeks of practising the old 4-hour-a-day approach. "Write lists" - I do that all the time. The lists are huge and it can take a month to cross off a single item from the list. So now I just make a list of what I plan to accomplish TODAY, knowing that half of the items will probably only get started tomorrow or the next day. But I try to keep it down to ONLY those things that I really need to do NOW. "Keep a notebook" - always useful but not always practical. I've tried many ways of recording my thoughts and ideas, To Do apps on my iPad or pocket size notebooks, or even the little note-taking feature on my mobile phone. The only thing that did work was a large hard-cover A4 ledger that I kept on my desk at all times, and where I wrote down notes and scribbles and ideas and contact details and the main points of our discussion with people I spoke to on the phone. I changed the book each year, and then tended to lose the previous years' editions. Now I try to type notes into my Outlook Calendar (using the "notes" feature of Outlook doesn't really work, it seems to work better if it's related to the date I thought about or discussed the issue with someone). Using the Task feature in To Do apps or in Outlook doesn't seem to work either. More effective seems to be if I make an appointment with a reminder in the Calendar section. Then it pops up as something I need to do, until I dismiss it as done. This takes us to about 60 pages of a 200-page book. Oops - sorry... it's only a 100-page book because the left-hand side are for titles only. After this, we get into the rather inane suggestions like "Count your bags" or "Streamline your movements" or "Stockpile". Counting your bags as a way not to forget things kind of makes sense, until you realize that we mostly do that anyway (except when it's raining and we have two extra items like an umbrella and raincoat to think about). I nearly always have exactly the same number of items with me when I go out: phone, wallet, iPad or laptop, keys. I instinctively know if I'm missing something. And I pat myself before leaving somewhere to make sure I have all my belongings. Streamlining my movements and stockpiling is also obvious-but-so-what kind of advice. Whether I have to "waste time" to go and buy toothpaste rather than have an extra tube on hand at all times isn't going to solve my deep-rooted procrastination problems. I already have a system in place where I double up on everything. There's always an extra pack of batteries lying around, and I have two bottles of gas for the cooker. When one runs out, I replace it and then go out and buy another spare when I'm inclined to do so. On page 89 is probably the most important piece of

advice anywhere: "Don't do it yourself". (Repeated again on pg 145: "Learn to delegate".) Again, easier said than done. I have enough work for 10 people, but the dilemma is how do I get to the stage where I am organized enough so that I can have the system and procedures written down and can train people to do the work or hire freelancers to help out with the work... not to mention be able to afford it. It's a Catch-22 chicken-and-egg situation that I've struggled with all my working life. As an entrepreneur, I know that I need to employ or partner with people to help develop and market the products that will make me the money that will allow me to afford to pay them. But unless I have outside investment, I usually don't have the spare cash to be able to pay the people who will help me to generate the income. Also a lot of the work I do is uniquely creative at a very detailed level (e.g. deciding which version of a sentence to use when editing an audio commentary or how best to explain a tricky concept in an online course...) Richard spends exactly four paragraphs on this nugget of advice. I think Peter Drucker writes a better book about this particular issue. On page 155, he throws in one of the 7 Habits: "Know what is urgent - and what isn't", and reproduces the important/urgent quadrant. Then on the next page, he mentions "Organise your to-do list", something you should study by reading David Allen's book/system: Getting Things Done. After that the book consists of specious fillers and repeats, such "Know what you're doing" or "Organise your space" (repeat) or "Don't get interrupted" (repeat). I can see why the edition I bought is called the "expanded edition", it's just filled with more useless ideas. The disappointing let-down of not really getting anything *really* useful out of the book is why I've rated it as only one star. There really is not enough meat - in-depth discussion of how to make things really happen - to warrant buying (and wasting time in reading) this book. I'm still on the hunt for something that does actually help in real life and will update this review when I've found it! Maybe I'm being too harsh. Maybe this book deserves 2 stars because there are a few useful tips in it. But it's not what it says on the tin! I haven't learnt "how to get things done" from this book at all. And maybe you can suggest a book or some ideas that really do work in your replies... Thanks in advance, Gary6 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Simple, yet well written and helpful. By ServantofGod I had not read the author's other books. I did realize from the promotional messages on this that he did write a lot. Perhaps that's why his writing is so fluent and interesting indeed. With a big title on every left page and a concise elaboration on the right, the author's practical ideas were well communicated in his shrewd use of words. I had read many good books of this genre before yet I am still satisfied with this one. In short, recommended! Below please find my favorite passages for your reference. Do you know, for a bloke you're very good at multitasking. You're managing to be boring and irritating at the same time. pg69 Be decisive about mess. 77 Once you learn to get ahead of yourself it gets easier and easier. At the first sign of worry about what might happen, just do it now and there'll be no panic later. pg97 When you look back over the to-do list at bedtime, the only way to judge whether you did a good job is by seeing if the things that really mattered got done. pg141 Know what makes a difference. pg156 It's really important that you are organized and are seen to be organised. Your colleagues and your boss will judge you on how much you appear to get done, and the level of trust and responsibility you get at work, not to mention promotions and pay, will be heavily influenced by this perception. So don't just be organised, look organised too. Know where you are going.

In this clever book, bestselling author Richard Templar delivers a collection of principles, tactics and techniques that will make sure things always get done, without you ever having to break a sweat or stay up into the small hours to do it. These pithy, self-contained ideas are so straightforward that you can even read the book itself without trying too hard.

"Templar's refreshingly pithy guide shows how, with the right strategies in place, anyone can become well-organised and productive." Good Book Guide, January 2010 About the Author Richard Templar is the author of the internationally bestselling Rules books which have now been enjoyed by more than 2 million people around the world.