

My Organized Life Starts with a Paper Planner	Vali G. Heist, Author and Certified Professional Organizer®
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It's that time of year when I buy a new paper day planner for the coming year. I actually look forward to it and for over 30 years I've used the same style (week-at-a-glance) so I don't mess with success. If you are a tactile person like me, you probably prefer paper. If you are a techy, or if you have to share your calendar with other people, you likely prefer a digital planner. Jason Taylor, time management blogger on TaylorInTime.com has a few reasons why a paper planner is better than a digital planner. I've added my two cents to strengthen the argument so let's break it down.

1. **Speed.** When I write an event in my planner, it takes me one second to find my place; no password required. I block out the whole time I'll need plus travel thus helping to eliminate overscheduling.
2. **Task Lists.** I write my task list to the right of the day's schedule. Try to limit your to-do's to 2 or 3 items that **MUST** be done that day and be realistic. Check them off when completed, but don't erase or scratch it out so you can still maintain a written record.
3. **Best Tool for the Job.** A day planner is just a planner. It doesn't serve as a phone or a way to connect to social media so there is less chance of getting off track. When you review your schedule, you only see your priorities and not the squeaky wheel (a.k.a. Facebook, Instagram, etc.) that will try to derail your plans. And make sure to schedule the fun stuff—lunch with friends, travel, etc.—so you are sure to have a life.
4. **Field of Vision.** When you open a paper planner, you quickly see what you want to see. There's no swiping, pinching or clicking of a mouse involved.
5. **Memory.** Jason Taylor says that research has proven that writing things down helps commit them to memory. Being able to picture my schedule and tasks keeps me focused on a busy day. I also list the phone number of the person I am meeting with just in case I need it quickly.
6. **Custom Fit.** All day planners look generally the same; but the best planning system is the one that you adjust to reflect your life and your style. Using color markers, sticky notes or symbols is what makes your planner personal.
7. **More or Less.** How much you write in your planner is totally up to you. The more you write, the more of a record you have of your life. The more you write, the less you'll have to depend upon your memory and leave more space in your brain for the here and now.
8. **Business Tool.** If you have a small business, you could use your planner to record expenses or revenue. Whether or not you transfer that information to a digital system is up to you. Because of the amount of information I record in my planner, it becomes a back-up for my tax return.



When selecting a time management tool to keep your schedule, trust your instincts and match it to your personality. Don't let the latest trend derail your focus.

Clutter Quote: *"A schedule defends from chaos and whim. It is a net for catching days. A schedule is a mock-up of reason and order--willed, faked, and so brought into being."* Anne Dillard, American author