

Executive Skills Defined

Planning and Prioritization

Deciding what steps to take.

The ability to create a road map to reach a goal or to complete a task. It also involves being able to make decisions about what is important to focus on and what is not.

Task Initiation

Getting started without a delay.

The ability to begin projects without undue procrastination, in an efficient or timely fashion.

Stress Tolerance

Managing your stress.

The ability to work in stressful situations and to cope with uncertainty, change, and performance demands.

Organization

Knowing where I put things.

The ability to create and maintain systems to keep track of information or materials.

Response Inhibition

Seeing the consequence before I say or do something.

The capacity to think before you act—this ability to resist the urge to say or do something allows us the time to evaluate a situation and how our behavior might impact it.

Working Memory

Remembering what I did and what I need to do.

The ability to hold information in memory while performing complex tasks. It incorporates the ability to draw on past learning or experience to apply to the situation at hand or to project into the future.

Time Management

Know about how long a task will take and what the deadline is.

The capacity to estimate how much time one has, how to allocate it, and how to stay within time limits and deadlines. It also involves a sense that time is important.

Emotional Control

Keeping my cool when frustrated.

The ability to manage emotions in order to achieve goals, complete tasks, or control and direct behavior.

Metacognition

Evaluating how you're doing.

The ability to step back and take a bird's eye view of yourself in a situation, to observe how you problem-solve. It also includes self-monitoring and self-evaluative skills (e.g., asking yourself "How am I doing?" or "How did I do?")

Sustained Attention

Paying attention, even when I don't feel like it.

The capacity to maintain attention to a situation or task in spite of distractibility, fatigue, or boredom.

Goal-Directed Persistence

Sticking with your goal.

The capacity to have a goal, follow through to the completion of that goal, and not be put off or distracted by competing interests.

Flexibility

Going with the flow, accepting change.

The ability to revise plans in the face of obstacles, setbacks, new information, or mistakes. It relates to adaptability to changing conditions.