

# Your Eisenhower Matrix

## Nurse Edition



# How to Use This Matrix as a Nurse

This isn't about perfection - it's about sustainable, safe patient care. Use it to protect your energy for what matters most.

## The 3-Question Quick Sort

1. Does this directly impact patient safety or immediate care? 2. Will this prevent future complications? 3. Can someone else do this, or can it wait?

## Remember

- You can't pour from an empty cup • Good enough documentation is good enough • Taking breaks prevents errors • Delegation is not laziness • Nursing is a marathon, not a sprint

## The 3-Question System for Nurses

Before adding any task to your matrix, ask yourself these three questions:

### Question 1

**Does this directly impact patient safety or immediate care needs?**

**If YES:** It's Important + Urgent (Quadrant 1)

**If NO:** Move to question 2

### Question 2

## **Will this prevent future complications or improve care quality?**

**If YES:** It's Important + Not Urgent (Quadrant 2)

**If NO:** Move to question 3

## **Question 3**

## **Can another team member handle this, or can it wait until after patient care?**

**If YES:** It belongs in Quadrant 3 (delegate) or 4 (delete)

**If NO:** Reconsider - it might be more important than you think

# Examples for Each Quadrant

## Critical Care (Do Now)

True emergencies that directly impact patient safety or critical care needs

- **Code Blue response** - Life-threatening emergency - nothing else matters
- **Administering time-critical medications** - Medication windows affect patient outcomes
- **Responding to critical lab values** - Immediate intervention prevents complications
- **Patient fall or acute status change** - Requires immediate assessment and intervention
- **Doctor's STAT orders** - Urgent medical decisions require immediate action

## Preventive Care (Schedule It)

Activities that improve patient outcomes and prevent future crises

- **Reviewing patient histories before shift** - Preparation prevents medication errors and missed care
- **Creating personal organization systems** - Saves time and reduces errors throughout shift
- **Patient education and discharge planning** - Prevents readmissions and complications
- **Building rapport with difficult patients** - Makes all future interactions smoother
- **Continuing education and certifications** - Improves your skills and career opportunities

## Interruption Zone (Delegate/Deflect)

Tasks that feel urgent but don't directly impact patient care

- **Non-critical call bells** - CNAs can handle comfort requests
- **Routine family updates** - Set specific times for family communication
- **Restocking supplies during busy times** - Delegate to support staff when possible
- **Non-urgent physician clarifications** - Batch these for when doctor rounds

- **Committee meeting attendance** - Get notes from colleague if patient care is busy

## Time Drain Zone (Delete)

Things that steal time without improving patient care

- **Perfectionist charting beyond requirements** - Good documentation is enough
- **Gossip and drama at the nurses' station** - Drains energy without any benefit
- **Checking work email on days off** - Boundaries are essential for longevity
- **Reorganizing supply room that's already functional** - Procrastination disguised as productivity
- **Comparing yourself to 'super nurse' social media** - Your patients need you, not perfection

# Common Teacher Traps to Avoid

## The Everything is Life-or-Death Trap

In healthcare, it's easy to treat every task as critical.

**Solution:** True emergencies are rare. Most tasks can wait 30 minutes without harm.

## The Documentation Black Hole

Spending hours perfecting notes instead of providing care.

**Solution:** Chart to standard, not to perfection. Set time limits.

## The Yes Nurse Syndrome

Taking on everyone else's tasks because you want to help.

**Solution:** Helping yourself stay focused helps your patients more.

## The Skip Break Trap

Working through breaks to 'catch up' but getting more behind.

**Solution:** Breaks are Quadrant 2 - they prevent errors and burnout.

# Your Shift Eisenhower Routine

5 minutes before shift, 3 minutes after. That's all.

## **Morning (5 minutes pre-shift)**

1. Review patient assignments and priorities
2. Identify critical tasks for first 2 hours
3. Note which tasks can be delegated
4. Schedule your break times (yes, really)
5. Set one Quadrant 2 goal for the shift

## **Afternoon (3 minutes post-shift)**

1. Quick brain dump of incomplete tasks
2. Note what made today harder than needed
3. Identify one system to improve tomorrow
4. Celebrate what you accomplished
5. Leave work at work

© 2025 EisenhowerMatrix.com and Appfluence Inc. Visit us at <https://www.eisenhowermatrix.com>