

(Link to share: [The Complete Checklist For Problem Solving](#))

See [The Simple Checklist For Problem Solving](#). Understand why to use it: [Discussion About](#).

THE COMPLETE CHECKLIST FOR PROBLEM SOLVING

This checklist is not a “procedure”, though you could use it to create something like a procedure. It is a reminder to make sure you do not miss anything that could be helpful/important.

1. ID and define the problem

- ☐ Identify “the gap”
 - ☐ What is wanted/needed desired
 - ☐ What is the current condition
- ☐ Effects
- ☐ Causes (the source of the real problem)
- ☐ Agree it is a problem
- ☐ Make sure understanding exists, create it
- ☐ Use discussion

Other factors to consider:

- ☐ List all obstacles
- ☐ Identify all (potential) problems and solutions
- ☐ Break problem into its component parts/subproblems.
- ☐ Define goals – what do I (we) want to achieve
- ☐ Psychological barriers described fully, so solvable
- ☐ Blindspots
- ☐ Use factual evidence
- ☐ Identify assumptions
- ☐ Apply reasoning (consider using diagramming or charting)
 - ☐ Is cause and effect rational? Coincidental?
 - ☐ Logically consistent?

2. Seeking info and solutions:

- ☐ What other information, perspectives, and learning are needed
 - ☐ Learn how each thing works
 - ☐ Learn how to work each thing needed
- ☐ What ways can I get those?
 - ☐ Use extensive writing as a discovery technique, ☐ possibly show to others
 - ☐ Speak with a ☐ coach ☐ counselor ☐ very knowledgeable, rational friend
 - ☐ Use a focus group to come up with more solutions.

☐ [Research](#) ☐ Brainstorming¹ ☐ List 20 solutions².

☐ What are the prospective solutions?

☐ Which are acceptable?

☐ Decide and agree on solution

☐ Set the agreement/commitment

☐ Any new potential problems/unintended-consequences caused by the solution?

Other factors related to solutions:

☐ Clear up any negative reactions impeding problem solving.

☐ Make sure there aren't inaccurate predictions

☐ *The bigger the problem, the more concentration and urgency in solution*

☐ **3. Write up the solutions.** (Consider using [Master Problem Solving Form](#).)

☐ **4. Install in a complete system**

Build the plan

Build the system through which it is implemented

If all 4 steps are not checked off, you will not be as likely to have the results you truly want - and you'll have wasted a lot of the potential benefits!

☐ Be sure not to do **problem solving, thinking about goals, decision making in the head, as it is almost impossible to do well.** (Note that seeking a goal is a form of problem solving - solving a "problem"/gap between where you are and where you want to be>)

Discussed in [About The Problem Solving Checklist](#).

¹ Wild ideas are encouraged and not commented on, in fact approved of! Later, we go back through and eliminate what isn't workable.

² See form: [Challenges – 20 ideas](#).

THE SIMPLE CHECKLIST FOR PROBLEM SOLVING

Use this as a “quickie” list, but for more complex or impactful one use the complete checklist.

WRITE IT OUT

- ☐ Write down the problem (the brain cannot hold, or be clear about, the information)
- ☐ Write down what is wanted, clearly
- ☐ Write down all barriers, obstacles, anything in the way, any problem causers

GATHER/FIND THE INFORMATION NEEDED

- ☐ Screen/verify for fact/truth, logic
- ☐ Identify (unchecked out) assumptions!
- ☐ Brainstorm, do a mind dump/discovery of all thoughts/ideas
- ☐ Use others as needed for advice, inputs, objective reviews

ANALYZE/REASON

- ☐ Identify the processes/systems that failed or were missing
- ☐ Identify how to fix/add to the system
- ☐ Reason it through

WRITE OUT A SYSTEM TO ASSURE SUCCESS

IMPLEMENT THE SYSTEM

- ☐ Set aside enough time to do so - **don't move on to something else just because you feel better**
 - ☐ Be sure to complete it!

VERIFY THE RESULTS

- ☐ Improve as needed (must have a feedback /verification system if important)

Leave out a major step, you're doomed to lots of failures and repeats.

Write → Gather → Analyze → Systematize → Implement → Adjust

Leave out a major step, you're doomed to lots of failures and repeats.

See and use the materials in: [Problem Solving, Decision Making, Creating Change, Contents, Links Directory](#).

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