



# Structured Problem Solving



## Step 1: What is the problem?

Think about and discuss the problem or goal carefully then write down exactly what you believe to be the main problem or goal. The more time spent defining a problem that is specific, and potentially solvable, the better. (The problem analysis sheet may be useful here.)

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## Step 2: List all possible solutions

Brainstorm and put down *all* ideas, even bad ones. List all possible solutions without any evaluation of them at this stage.

1. 

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2. 

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3. 

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4. 

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5. 

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## Step 3: Consider each possible solution

Go down the list of possible solutions and assess the main advantages and disadvantages of each one.

Solution 1	Pros:	<hr/>
	Cons:	<hr/>
Solution 2	Pros:	<hr/>
	Cons:	<hr/>
Solution 3	Pros:	<hr/>
	Cons:	<hr/>
Solution 4	Pros:	<hr/>
	Cons:	<hr/>
Solution 5	Pros:	<hr/>
	Cons:	<hr/>



**Step 4: Choose the best or most practical solution**

Choose the solution or combination of them that can be carried out most easily with your present resources (time, money, skills, etc.)

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**Step 5: Plan how to carry out the best solution**

List, in small steps, how you intend to implement the solution. Identify the resources needed and the main problems that need to be overcome. Practise difficult steps. Take all the information needed with you (addresses, names, phone numbers).

Resources needed: \_\_\_\_\_

Problems to overcome: \_\_\_\_\_

Step 1. \_\_\_\_\_

Step 2. \_\_\_\_\_

Step 3. \_\_\_\_\_

Step 4. \_\_\_\_\_

**Step 6: Record progress on the day by ticking above. Review how well the solution was carried out. Feel good about all efforts.** Revise your plans if necessary. Continue the problem solving process until you have resolved your stress or achieved your goal.

Adapted from 'Structured Problem Solving' Edited by Gavin Andrews MD, UNSW, Jan 03  
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**Recommended Reading**

Cusick, Anne. **Choices - What am I doing with my life?** (Simon & Schuster)

Smith, Shirley. **The Game of Life Playbook - How to get what you really want in life.** (Bantam Books)