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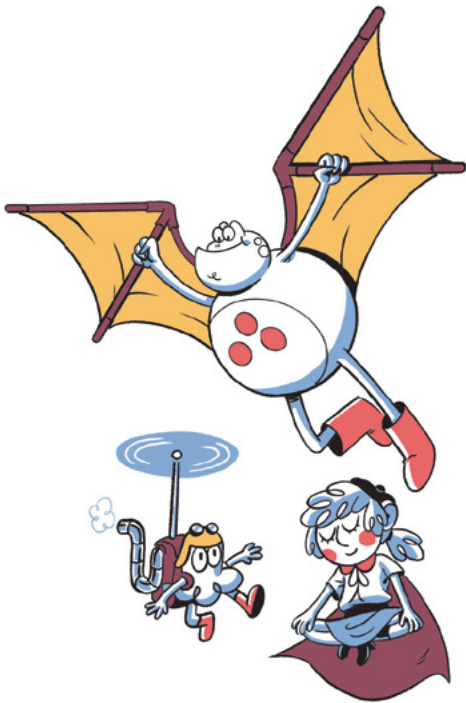
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# Productivity Tactics

Volume I

Illustrated by Miklós Felvideki.

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## *Ready for a little boost?*

A new approach can help you achieve your goals!  
Here are a few ways to get started:

- a. Use the ***Productivity Strategy System*** card to help you determine which tactic to use.
- b. Spread the cards out and browse the titles and summaries until you find one that speaks to you.
- c. Check out the 📖 ***Recipe*** cards to find a series of tactics that will help you give your productivity a complete overhaul.

*Tip: share the deck, or one tactic in particular, with others so that they can join you on the path towards productivity!*

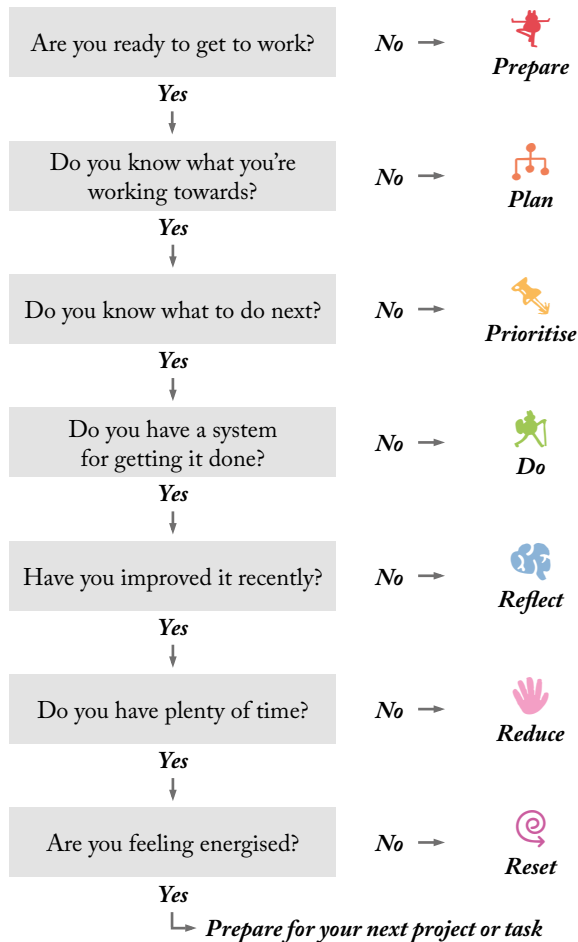
## *Join the Pip Decks community*

Get help implementing these tactics, and learn from others building products and leading teams.

[\*pipdecks.com/community\*](https://pipdecks.com/community)

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# Productivity Strategy System



## **Prepare**

Get yourself in the right headspace to nail your goals, every time.

## **Plan**

Streamline your workflow and keep track of everything you're working on.

## **Prioritise**

Spend your precious energy wisely with these tactics for ruthless prioritisation.

## **Do**

The time for talk is over; get in the zone, obliterate distractions and power through your to-do list.

## **Reflect**

Avoid getting stuck in a rut by regularly reflecting on and refining your processes.

## **Reduce**

Even at maximum productivity, there's only so much you can do. Prune the dead wood from your schedule and watch your impact double.

## **Reset**

If hard work just ain't working, take things back to basics with a 'reset' ritual.



# Burnout Buster

**Bounce back from exhaustion and avoid burnout in future.**

This recipe helps you recharge, reconnect and recalibrate. Use it when you're feeling depleted, unmotivated or overwhelmed.

After using it once, aim to never need it again.

*"Self-care is giving the world the best of you, instead of what's left of you."*

– Katie Reed

## Burnout Buster

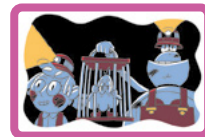
### 1. @ Monk Mode

Mindfully disconnect for a full system reset.



### 2. @ Canary In The Coalmine

Identify the signs of burnout, so it doesn't creep up on you in future.



### 3. @ Wellbeing 101

Rate your current health habits to see where you can make helpful changes.



### 4. 🖐 Kill It With Fire

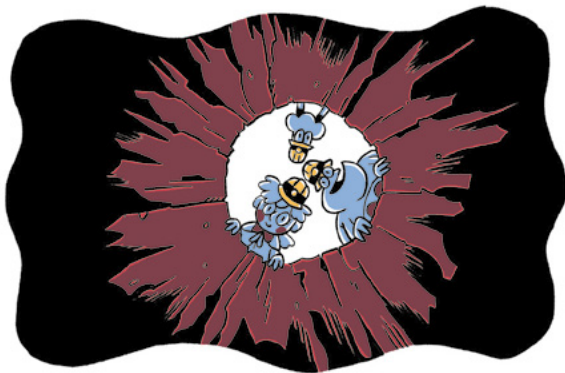
Simplify your schedule so you have space to think.



### 5. 🌀 Ritual Recalibration

Reflect on your current work rituals so you can make changes or recommit to what's serving you.





# Deep Work Day

Knuckle down for a day of focussed, meaningful work.

This recipe helps you get rid of distractions and blast through your most important tasks.

If you find this hard at first, don't be disheartened – it gets easier with practice.

*"The ability to concentrate intensely is a skill that must be trained."*

– Cal Newport

## Deep Work Day

### 1. 🚩 Focus Fortress

Set up your environment to minimise noise in all its forms.



### 2. 🌸 One-Minute Breathing

Wake your brain up, ready to focus fully.



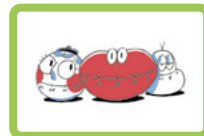
### 3. 🌱 Single-Task Superhero

Tackle one important task at a time instead of jumping all over the place.



### 4. 🌱 Pomodoro

Break your next important task into manageable bursts of work.



### 5. 🔄 Get Feedback

Break out of your deep work bubble and get a fresh perspective on your output before you continue.





# Project Planning

Set new projects up for success with clear goals, a clear plan, and clear communication.

Use this flexible recipe to get people working together effectively and build momentum. Make these tactics part of your default productivity toolkit.

*“Good fortune is what happens when opportunity meets planning.”*

– Thomas Edison

## Project Planning

### 1. SMART Goals

Set crystal clear goals for your project so you know what to prioritise.



### 2. Communication Canvas

Define how everyone will communicate, so work can flow smoothly.



### 3. Kanban

Plan and track progress on the tasks that make up your project.



### 4. Yes, Maybe, BTW

Define the scope of individual tasks and gather any relevant documents or references.



### 5. Weekly Focus

Frame your week with a strong sense of purpose and a clear-eyed reflection about how you did.





# Mortal Coil


**You have 4,000 weeks on Earth if you live to 80. This recipe helps you decide how to use them meaningfully.**

The awkward truth lurking beneath every productivity tip is that our time is finite.


We can't do everything and we'll never achieve perfection, but we can be radically intentional about where we channel our energy and how we spend our time.

*"The secret to regaining control is to accept that you never had it in the first place."* – Oliver Burkeman


## Mortal Coil

1.  **Mindful Mojo**  
Centre yourself before contemplating some big questions.




2.  **Ikigai**  
Reflect on your unique role in the world so you can organise your life accordingly.




3.  **SMART Goals**  
Set yourself some tangible goals connected to a deeper sense of purpose or curiosity.

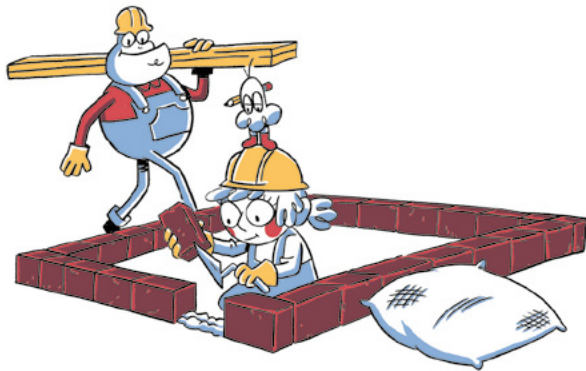


4.  **Seinfeld System**  
Decide on a single habit you'll commit to doing every day, based on your insights and ambitions.



5.  **Wonder Beam**  
Send out your Bat Signal – let the world know about the person you're becoming.





# Teamwork Tune-Up

Get together with your team to check-in on progress, reflect on current ways of working, and lay the foundations for high performance.

This recipe helps you communicate and collaborate better. Great for those times when teams come together in-person, but works like a dream remotely, too.

*"None of us is as smart as all of us."* – Ken Blanchard

## Teamwork Tune-Up

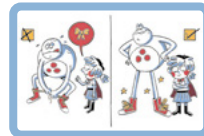
### 1. 🌟 Laugh Out Loud

Loosen up with a goofy exercise that's grounded in solid science.



### 2. 📊 Progress Check

Begin with a reality check – how's the team faring against its goals right now?



### 3. 🧐 Captain Hindsight

Reflect on recent outcomes and working practices; celebrate wins and spot opportunities to improve.



### 4. 🗨️ Communication Canvas

Agree on a set of communication fundamentals that work for everyone.



### 5. 🌴 Time Oasis

Protect time for exploration and upskilling to keep your team motivated.







# Clear The Decks

Refresh your mind ready to begin a new project or set out on a new path.

It's all too easy to race from one project to the next, but we don't do ourselves any favours when we ignore the opportunity to 'zoom out' for a moment.

Use this recipe as a restorative interlude between major pieces of work or before embarking on something new.

*"It's not what you look at that matters, it's what you see."*

– Henry David Thoreau

## Clear The Decks

### 1. Sunrise Scribblings

Begin your day by emptying your head of whatever thoughts bubble up.



### 2. Nimble Eyes, Nimble Mind

Ready yourself for fresh thinking with some brain-friendly eye exercises.



### 3. Mindful Disruption

Take this opportunity to play around with your routine, signifying the beginning of a new phase.



### 4. Daydream Station

Spend some time simply letting your mind wander for a change.



### 5. Single Step

Create an instant sense of momentum on your next project so starting doesn't feel scary.





# Mindful Mojo

**Pause... pay attention to the present moment to gain focus, reduce stress and enhance productivity.**

Modern life bombards us with distractions, leaving us frazzled and unfocussed.

This is a quick and easy technique for centring yourself – perfect before diving into work, after a meeting, or whenever you're feeling overwhelmed.

*"You can't manage time; you can only manage yourself."*  
– Peter Drucker

## Mindful Mojo

1. Find a comfortable and quiet space where you can sit or stand without distractions. Don't worry about being totally zen – just aim for a little peace and quiet.
2. Decide how long you want to practice mindfulness (even just a minute or two will do). Set a timer to keep you on track without having to check the clock.
3. Close your eyes or soften your gaze, and bring your attention to your breath. Don't try to change it – just observe the sensation of inhaling and exhaling.

Breathe in... breathe out... repeat.

4. Your mind will likely wander – that's totally normal. When it does, gently acknowledge it and bring your focus back to your breath. Keep doing this until your timer goes off.

And that's it!

*Tip: make mindfulness a habit by doing it before or after an activity that's already part of your routine.*

Do this mindfulness practice regularly and you'll transform frazzled nerves into a calm and focussed mind, ready to tackle whatever you're working on.



# Sunrise Scribblings

Write every morning in a freestyle fashion to offload mental clutter and spark creativity.

Without a release valve, our minds can become overcrowded with thoughts. Use this tactic daily for a quick brain cleanse before you get to work.

*“Creativity – like human life itself – begins in darkness.”*  
– Julia Cameron


## Sunrise Scribblings

1. Find a comfortable space where you can write each morning. Grab a notebook and pen, or your favourite digital tool.
2. Set aside at least five minutes each morning to write down anything and everything that comes to mind.

Ideally, do this as close to waking up as possible (before your brain has a chance to lock your subconscious away again until bedtime).

Let it flow – there’s no right or wrong way to do this!

3. Aim for up to three pages of free-flowing thoughts. Don’t worry about grammar, punctuation or spelling.
4. When you’ve finished, simply put your scribblings away. Some people even throw them straight in the bin. The goal is clearing your mind, not dwelling on what you write.

*Tip: on rare occasions, you might have a creative breakthrough or notice an interesting thought that you don’t want to forget. Use your  **Spark File** whenever there’s something you want to capture.*



# Focus Fortress

**Create a calm work space and cut out interruptions so you can power through high value work.**

The world is noisy. If you're not careful, work days are just one distraction after another – you must defend your focus at all costs.

Try it today, and check in monthly to fend off new attacks on your most precious resource – your attention.

*“Lost time is never found again.”* – Benjamin Franklin

Once your fortress is secure, use  **Pomodoro** or  **Single-Task Superhero** to get stuff done.



## Focus Fortress

1. Craft a space where distractions are minimised:

Put your phone in a different room

Clear away anything non-essential (close software and browser tabs you're not using, move unrelated paperwork out of the way etc.)

Keep a water bottle within reach

2. Set clear boundaries: define your preferences for communication, like designated 'do not disturb' hours, and inform your colleagues or family members about your work routine.  **Power Hours** and  **Communication Canvas** can help with this.

3. Experiment with music and sound to see what helps you focus. Some great songs for productivity include:

'Ambient 1: Music for Airports' – Brian Eno

'Clair De Lune' – Claude Debussy


'Spiegel im Spiegel' – Arvo Part

'Weightless' – Marconi Union

'Bluebird' – Alexis Ffrench

'Strobe' – Deadmau5

You may also find white noise or nature sounds help. Noise-cancelling headphones can be a great investment in your productivity.

*Tip: Consider long-term cognitive control training techniques to strengthen your attention muscle.  **Mindful Mojo** is a perfect place to start.*



# One-Minute Breathing

**Inhale clarity with a one-minute breathing exercise to boost blood oxygen and increase mental performance.**

Ever find yourself feeling a bit foggy during the day? This easy breathwork exercise optimises your oxygen intake, keeping you sharp. Perfect whenever you need a little lift or a quick reset between tasks.

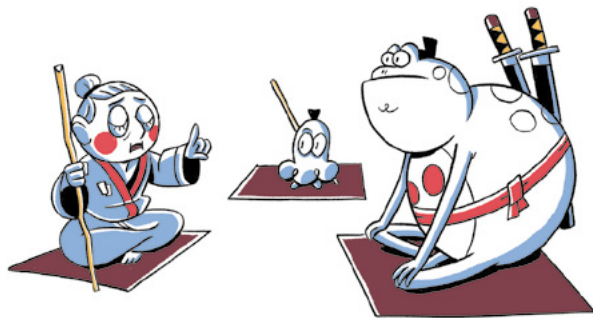
*“If you get tired, learn to rest, not to quit.” – Banksy*

## One-Minute Breathing

1. Find somewhere quiet where you can sit or stand comfortably, without fear of interruptions.
2. Set a timer for one minute, so you can dedicate this brief period solely to your breathing.
3. Begin by taking a deep, slow breath in through your nose for a count of six.  
  
Then, exhale through your mouth for a count of two.
4. Continue this breathing pattern until your timer goes off. Try to maintain a steady pace and concentrate on your breath throughout the exercise.
5. Take a moment to appreciate the increased sense of clarity and focus that you’ve just cultivated.

*Tip: next time, try doing this for up to 5 minutes.*

**Bonus:** if you’re feeling stressed or want to relax or improve your sleep, try this exercise with a 4–7–8 pattern: inhale (nose) for a count of four, hold your breath for a count of seven, then exhale (mouth) for a count of eight.



# Hard Truths

**Soak up hard-won productivity wisdom so you can make better choices about your work and live a happier life.**

We all deserve a fulfilling relationship with our work, but many of us make poor decisions in a noble effort to be more productive. This card offers a reality check – perfect for moments of introspection, or when you want to help someone else be more productive.

*“There are no shortcuts to any place worth going.”*  
– Beverly Sill

Combine this card with  **Productivity Principles** and  **Ritual Recalibration** to begin building a system that works for you.

## *Hard Truths*

**Working more hours can make you less productive.** Understand the value of rest and breaks to maintain peak performance.

**Productivity is mostly about what you remove.** Prioritise ruthlessly; unnecessary tasks only dilute your focus.

**You must learn to say no.** Overcommitting yourself can lead to burnout and subpar performance. Setting boundaries helps maintain focus on priorities.

**Multitasking is a mirage.** Juggling multiple tasks at once makes you less effective and adds stress.

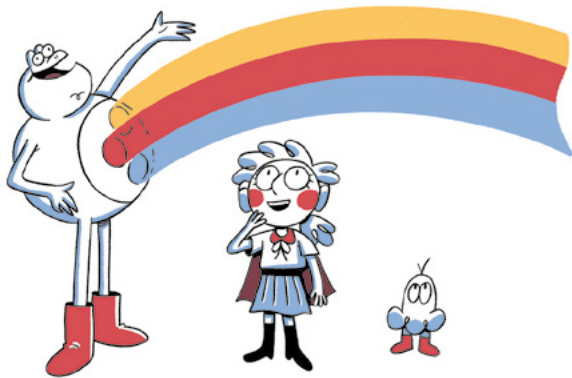
**You can't plan everything.** Uncertainty is inevitable, so get comfortable improvising when you need to.

**Failure is a necessary step towards success.** Embrace setbacks and learn from them. Remember that perfect doesn't exist.

**Success is subjective.** Don't measure your achievements by someone else's standards. Pursue your own unique goals.

**There's no single system that works for everyone.** Understand your strengths, weaknesses and personal rhythms to tailor your work style accordingly.

**The effort is the reward.** It's the process, not just the end result, that leads to personal growth and satisfaction. Find ways to enjoy it!



# Wonder Beam

**Publicly signal your passions to connect with like-minded people, find helpful new ideas and open up exciting opportunities.**

We can't do everything alone. By radiating your interests, you'll draw in the right people to support, challenge and inspire you.

This tactic can become a way of life, but it's most powerful when you're seeking fresh ideas, guidance or partnership in your projects.

*"Almost everything worthwhile carries with it some sort of risk."* – Chris Hadfield

## Wonder Beam

1. First, take a moment to identify and clarify your current interests. Note down any topics or projects that genuinely excite you and make you feel alive.
2. Then try one or more of the following:
  - Identify an online space for people with similar interests and contribute to the conversation, seeking to learn from and about others gathered there.
  - Write a blog post or create a piece of content that showcases your perspective. This can be an article, video or a social media post. Share it with your network and beyond.
  - Join a class or volunteer group where you can meet people who share your interests.
  - Reach out to experts or influencers in your area of interest. Send a thoughtful message or email, introducing yourself and expressing your genuine curiosity.

All of these activities can open doors to serendipitous encounters and valuable connections, mentorships and collaborations, increasing what Jason Roberts calls your "Luck Surface Area".

*Tip: sometimes the most interesting new connections happen outside of any deliberate plan. But it's nice to have a compass when you feel lost – @Ikigai can help. Open yourself to serendipity and watch your productivity flourish as you engage with what lights a spark in you.*





# Laugh Out Loud

**Laugh on purpose to boost your mood and be your most focussed, creative and productive self.**

When you're in a good mood, your work is better. This playful 'laughter yoga' exercise fills your body with oxygen and endorphins, preparing you for high-quality work.

Use this tactic on your own or with a group, at the beginning of the day or any time you want to lift your mood.

*"You wouldn't worry so much about what others think of you if you realised how seldom they do."* – Eleanor Roosevelt

## Laugh Out Loud

1. Find a comfortable space where you can stand or sit with ease, preferably somewhere you don't mind getting a bit silly.
2. Take a few deep breaths, stretching your arms overhead as you inhale and lowering them as you exhale. Gently shake out your limbs to release any tension.
3. Begin with a series of fake laughs, gradually allowing them to become more genuine.

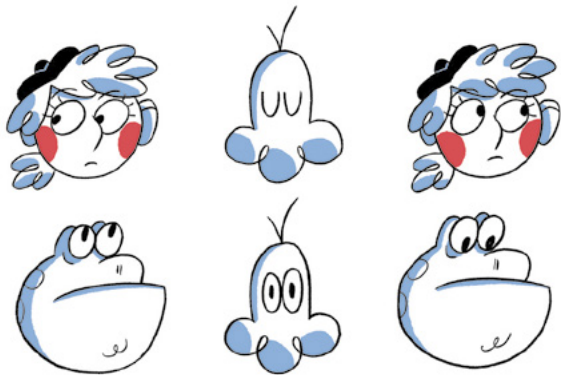
Try different laughter styles, such as a cheeky giggle or a big belly laugh. Be playful and open to the experience.

*Tip: imagine you're watching the funniest comedy show ever, and mimic the way you'd laugh.*

4. As you laugh, maintain eye contact with others if you're in a group, or look at yourself in the mirror if you're alone. This encourages contagious laughter and boosts the feel-good factor.
5. Once you've had a hearty laugh, take a moment to relax and breathe deeply, soaking up the positive vibes you've cultivated.

You're now primed for a productive work session!





# Nimble Eyes, Nimble Mind

**Exercise your eyes with quick focus-switching to prevent eye strain and boost productivity.**

Activate your neural circuitry at the start of your working day or any time your eyes feel tired, and pave the way for new, productive habits.

*“What is now proved was once only imagined.” – William Blake*

## Nimble Eyes, Nimble Mind

1. Find a comfortable spot with a variety of objects at different distances, such as a room with a window view.
2. Begin by focussing on an object close to you, like a pen on your desk, and then quickly switch your focus to something further away, like a tree outside the window.

Pretend you're a detective scanning the scene for clues.


3. Next, practice moving your gaze in different directions: up, down, left, right. Hold each position for a few seconds before switching to the next.

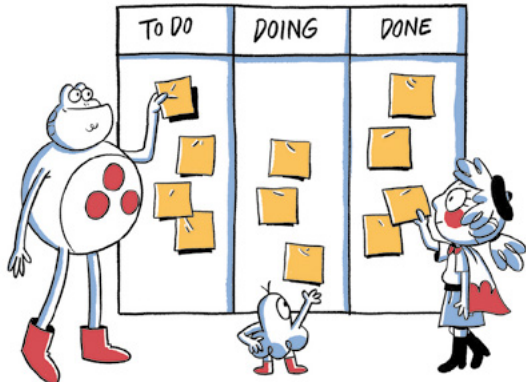
Imagine you're following a mischievous fly zipping around the room.

4. Finish the eye workout by looking diagonally from top-left to bottom-right and vice versa, stretching your eye muscles to their fullest extent.

After completing the eye exercises, close your eyes for a few moments, take a deep breath and enjoy the rejuvenating effects.

Your eyes and brain are now ready for a productive work session!

*Tip: stack with  **Mindful Mojo** for a daily sit-down-to-work ritual that tells your brain it's time to be productive.*



# Kanban

**Visualise what's happening, what's next, and what's done to streamline your workflow and stay focussed.**

Keep track of work plans and progress visually to reduce confusion, simplify communication and help you work at a steady, sustainable pace.



Kanban is perfect for freelancers, teams or anyone juggling multiple responsibilities. Use it as an ongoing place to plan and track important tasks, and update it daily.

Make steady progress on tasks in the 'Doing' column on your *Kanban* board by using  **Pomodoro**.

## Kanban

1. Grab a whiteboard or a wall with sticky notes, and divide it into three columns: *To-Do*, *Doing* and *Done*.



2. Fill *To-Do* with tasks or projects you need to tackle, written on sticky notes or cards. Prioritise them by importance or deadline, based on your  **SMART Goals**. You can use  **Eisenhower Matrix** to help with this.

Consider using different colours for different categories or priorities.

3. Set your Work-In-Progress (WIP) limit – a maximum number of tasks that can be in the *Doing* column at any given time.

*Tip: limit this to the number of team members available, so each person is working on one task at a time.*

4. As you start working on a task, move it to the *Doing* column, and once completed, shift it to *Done*.
5. Regularly review and update your board, ensuring you're always working on the most important tasks and respecting your WIP limit.



# SMART Goals

Set effective goals so ideal outcomes and deadlines are crystal clear.

Set goals to improve performance, increase persistence and enhance wellbeing. Whether you're setting goals for yourself, your team or your company, make this your go-to framework.

*"The greater danger for most of us lies not in setting our aim too high and falling short; but in setting our aim too low, and achieving our mark."* – Michelangelo

Clear your mind with  **One-Minute Breathing** first so you can apply maximum brainpower to thinking about your goals.

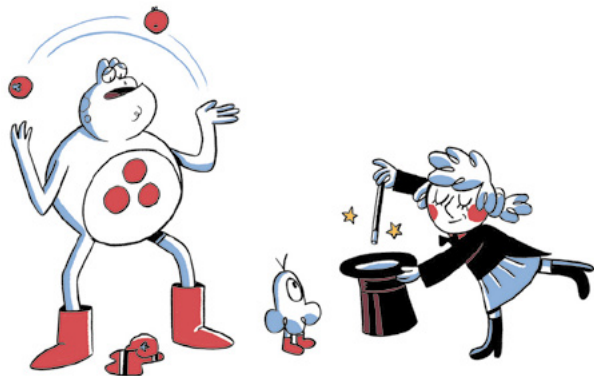
## SMART Goals

1. Start by defining your goal. What do you want to achieve? Be as **specific** as possible, describing the desired outcome in detail.
2. Make your goal **measurable** by identifying concrete indicators of progress or success. Ask yourself, "How will I know when I've achieved my goal?"
3. Assess whether your goal is **achievable**. Consider your current resources, constraints, and capabilities, and adjust your goal if necessary to ensure it's realistic.
4. Ensure your goal is **relevant** to your broader objectives, values, or priorities. If you're not sure:
  - Check whether it's aligned with your company's strategy.
  - Seek input from others involved in the project or affected by the goal.
  - Revisit the problem – consider the original problem or need that the goal is meant to address.
5. Set a **time-bound** deadline for your goal. Whether it's a short-term or long-term goal, having a target date adds a sense of urgency and keeps you on track.

Good example: *"Boost our monthly sales by 10% in the next three months by promoting a new product line and offering special discounts".*

Bad example: *"Make our website better".*

*Tip: Don't be limited by your goals. Stay open to new paths.*



# Weekly Focus

**Set your intention for the week ahead and describe what you want to achieve – this helps you ignore anything irrelevant.**

Juggling multiple workstreams is a recipe for mediocre results. Use this tactic when planning your week or whenever you feel competing priorities creeping in.

*“Productivity isn’t about getting more stuff done. It’s about focusing on the things that matter and letting go of everything else.” – Mark Manson*

Once you’ve defined your Weekly Focus, try **3–3–3** to organise your time each day and stick to a well-balanced schedule.

## Weekly Focus

1. Reflect on the upcoming week. What theme or focus will help you achieve your **SMART Goals** and maintain balance?
2. Choose your one-word intention. This should be a word that resonates with you and captures your desired focus for the week (*flow, balance, learn, explore or launch*, for example).
3. Define your main outcome – what’s the most important result you want to achieve this week? Make sure it’s specific and actionable (*‘prototype tested with five users’*, for example).
4. Write down your one-word intention and primary outcome and display it where you’ll see it daily.

Use it as a reminder to stay focussed and avoid becoming over-committed.

5. At the end of the week, assess how well you maintained your focus and achieved your primary outcome. Consider the following themes:
  - Successes
  - Challenges
  - Lessons learned
  - Areas to improve

Use this insight to set a new intention and outcome for the upcoming week.

*Tip: this tactic can also help you write insightful **Weeknotes**.*



# Communication Canvas

**Align with your team on communication tools, expectations and boundaries, so you can keep work flowing without losing focus.**

Tired of endless email chains or ill-timed interruptions? When your internal comms sound like a brass band in a blender, this tactic helps you calm the chaos. Use it when forming new teams or starting new projects.


The sections on the back are meant as a simple template to get you started. If there are other things you want to capture, play with it!

## Communication Canvas

1. Gather your team and a large paper or digital workspace for your Communication Canvas.
2. Divide the canvas into the following sections and fill them in together.
  - **Communication Tools** – what tools will be used for what purpose?
  - **Async vs Sync** – which types of communication should be asynchronous (not real-time or instant) or synchronous (real-time)?
  - **Information Flow** – who needs to be informed about what, and when?
  - **Key Decision Dates** – when will important decisions be made?
  - **Don'ts** – what are the communication boundaries or no-gos?

For example, the *Information Flow* section could be filled in as follows:

- **Weekly updates:** *shared on Monday mornings via email summarising last week's achievements and outlining the plan for the upcoming week.*
- **Decisions:** *all major decisions documented in the project management tool, with key stakeholders tagged for visibility.*
- **Brainstorms:** *open to all team members for creative input and collaboration.*

In *Don'ts*, you might have principles like “avoid interrupting people during their  **Power Hours**”.

Once your Communication Canvas is complete, make it accessible to everyone on the team. Review and update it regularly, and use it as a reference point for effective communication throughout a project.



# Time Oasis

**Carve out 'slack time' in your work week to ignite new ideas and keep burnout at bay.**



Innovation tends to happen when there's dedicated time for exploration, tinkering and conversations outside your usual team. Use this tactic when you sense that you or your team could benefit from some room to experiment and connect.

*"Nothing fires up the brain like play." – Stuart Brown*


Not sure how to use your slack time? Search your  **Spark File** for inspiration, or try a  **Monk Mode** day.


## Time Oasis

1. Using a pen and paper, sketch out the structure of your typical work week. Then, find any precious pockets of unused time and mark them with a colour, symbol or pattern.
2. Choose a chunk of your week to designate as your oasis. 10–20% of overall time is a good amount to aim for.



Protect this time from other commitments by blocking it off in your calendar with  **Time Blocking**, and let any team members or colleagues know about your plan. You can also capture it on your  **Communication Canvas**.

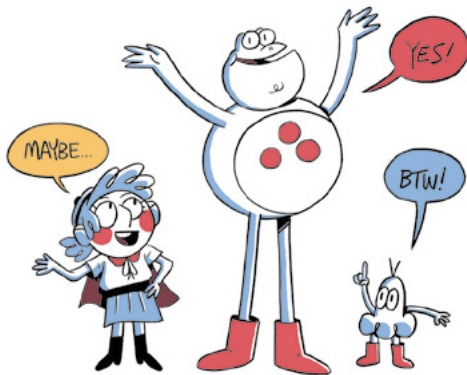
3. Create a list of activities, interests or conversations you'd like to dive into during your slack time.

This 'slacktivity' list is your playground, so let it be as free-spirited and varied as you like. It could include anything from learning a new skill to connecting with a colleague from another department, or a chance for some  **Daydream Station** time.

*Tip: if you're not sure how you'd like to use your Time Oasis,  **Ikigai** can help.*

4. Embrace this time as essential for personal and professional growth.

Welcome new ideas and connections, capture notes in your  **Spark File** and share any interesting experiments or discoveries with your coworkers or community –  **Wonder Beam** is a good place to start.





# Yes, Maybe, BTW

**Capture clear next steps, future options to return to, and key supporting references to tame any project.**

Imagine diving into a project, bombarded with tasks, ideas and resources, struggling to make sense of it all. It doesn't have to be that way; this straightforward system is your project management multitool – use it when kicking off a new piece of work, big or small.

*“The pain of discipline is far less than the pain of regret.” – Sarah Bombell*

This tactic works best when you've defined your  **SMART Goals**.  
After using this card, plan out your 'Yes' tasks with  **Kanban**.

## Yes, Maybe, BTW

1. Divide a sheet of paper (A4 or bigger) or digital canvas into three sections: *Yes*, *Maybe*, and *BTW* (by the way).

Yes	Maybe	BTW

2. Fill the *Yes* section with any essential actions that need to be completed for your task or project to succeed.
3. Fill the *Maybe* section with ideas that you might consider in the future, but are not critical to your current project.

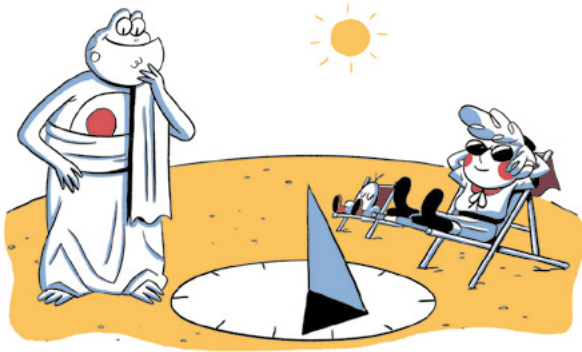
These items can be revisited as needed.

4. Use the *BTW* section to list any important references or resources related to your project.

This can include things like links to brand guidelines, workshop outputs or research findings; anything that's crucial for your project's execution.

5. Review your completed canvas and use it as a guide for decision-making and prioritisation throughout your project.








# Time Blocking



**Block out time in your calendar for important tasks to maximise focus.**

The Ancient Romans weren't perfect, but they were pretty good at *getting stuff done*. Long before clocks, they followed the sun to divide their days into 'horae' – twelve equal parts between sunrise and sunset, with a specific task for each hour. They were onto a good thing.



Use this tactic to plan out your time, days or weeks ahead, and cultivate a mindset of only working on one thing at a time.


Clarify  **SMART Goals** and make a masterplan with  **Kanban** first. Then try  **Pomodoro** when you're ready to start on a task.

## Time Blocking

1. Check what tasks need your attention next – this is easier when you've got your  **Kanban** board in good shape. If you're not sure what to prioritise, try  **Eisenhower Matrix**.
2. Estimate how much time you'll need to complete each task. Beware the 'planning fallacy' (a bias that leads us to underestimate how long things will take) – you can improve your accuracy by:
  - Checking how long similar tasks have taken in the past
  - Consulting with others who've completed similar tasks
  - Breaking tasks into smaller pieces
  - Updating your estimates as you make progress

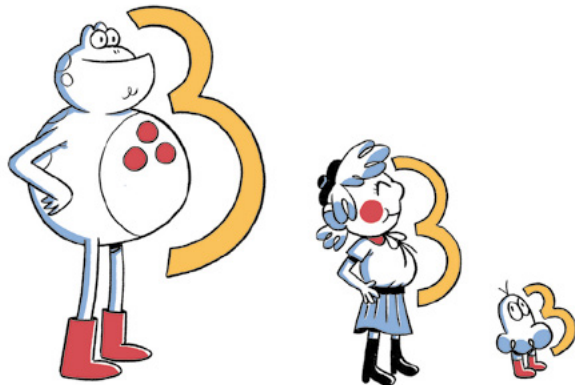
It's always a good idea to build in a buffer!

3. Think about the nature of each task. Will any require a focussed  **Deep Work Day**? Will collaboration be needed on any? Are some tasks more creative, and others more routine?
4. Grab your chosen calendar and assign a specific time block to each task, making sure to include time for breaks.  **Power Hours** can help you schedule wisely.

Remember to be realistic; overcommitting will only lead to burnout. To keep your schedule from getting too full, try  **Time Oasis**.

*Tip: for tiny tasks that need your attention some time in the future, consider setting a reminder instead.*





# 3-3-3

**Divide each day into three distinct blocks to slay your to-do list and make progress on the big stuff.**

Split your day into three categories to push forward on your most important project, while staying on top of small-but-urgent tasks and maintaining life's unglamorous essentials.



Use this approach on a daily basis.

*"You do not rise to the level of your goals. You fall to the level of your systems."* – James Clear


Use  **Pomodoro** or  **Single-Task Superhero** each day to make the most of the deep work time you schedule with this tactic.

# 3-3-3

You can use this tactic to schedule one day at a time, or to schedule full weeks.

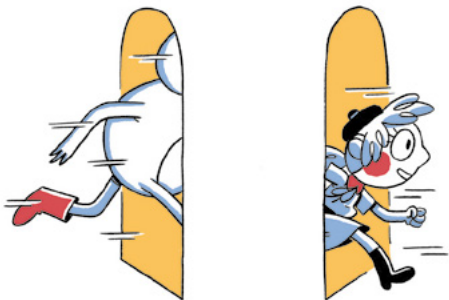
1. Identify your current most important project (MIP) based on your goals –  **SMART Goals** can help. If you don't have a clear purpose yet, begin with  **Ikigai**.

Example MIPs:

- Developing and launching a new product or service
  - Writing a book, screenplay or research paper
  - Completing a major renovation project
2. Identify your personal  **Power Hours** (when you do your best deep work). Block out the three-hour window when you're most alert and energised each day in your calendar to work on your MIP.
  3. List three urgent but easy tasks per day – things like completing a brief report or update, or responding to an important email. Complete these outside of your MIP time.
  4. Pinpoint three life maintenance activities per day – things like doing laundry, paying bills, or exercise. Complete these outside of your MIP time.

*Tip: accept that no system can make you superhuman (but this deck should get you pretty close).*

*"In a world of impossible demands, the only sane response is to do less, to step back, to give up on the impossible quest for comprehensiveness and control."* – Oliver Burkeman




# One In, One Out


**Swap tasks to stop your workload getting out of control.**

This tactic helps you stay focussed and maintain momentum without becoming overwhelmed. Use it when you have more incoming tasks than you can handle.

*“Happiness is not a matter of intensity but of balance, order, rhythm, and harmony.” – Thomas Merton*

When new tasks arrive, consider using  **Eisenhower Matrix** before this tactic to establish how important they are.


## One In, One Out

1. Check into your workload. List all the tasks and projects you're currently working on, along with their deadlines and levels of importance, or check your  **Kanban** board if you have one.
2. What new tasks or projects need your attention?

For each new addition, decide which existing task or project you can delete or delay to make space for it.

Which tasks are less urgent or less impactful than the new ones? Consider the trade-offs you're making. Ensure the tasks you're postponing or removing are genuinely less critical than the new additions.

Ask yourself: “Am I sacrificing long-term success for short-term gains?”

3. Create or update your  **Kanban** board to reflect the changes.

Keep applying the One In, One Out tactic whenever you need to add new tasks or projects to ensure you maintain a balanced workload.

*Tip: this principle isn't limited to work tasks – it's also great for managing your personal life. Use it to declutter your living space or balance your social calendar. For instance, when you buy a new item, donate or discard something you no longer need. Or, when you take on a new hobby or social commitment, check your existing activities for something you can let go of. This way, you'll keep your life well-balanced and avoid feeling overwhelmed by the demands of work and home.*



# Seinfeld System



**Commit to a key daily action and build an unbreakable streak to achieve great things.**

Without consistent habits, we can lose our way. But ‘little and often’ is powerful. Use this tactic as the thread that connects each day to the next.

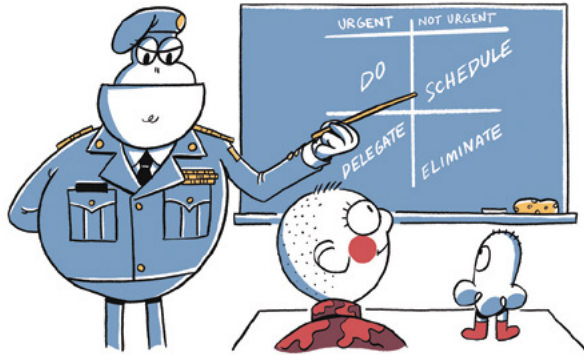
*“After a few days you’ll have a chain. Just keep at it and the chain will grow longer every day. You’ll like seeing that chain, especially when you get a few weeks under your belt. Your only job is to not break the chain.” – Jerry Seinfeld*

Get clear on the outcome you’re aiming for first with  **SMART Goals**.  
If your habits need a shake-up, try  **Ritual Recalibration**.

## Seinfeld System

1. If you already have a key daily habit that moves you closer to an important achievement or helps you become the person you want to be, jump to step 4.
2. If you’re looking to develop a new productive habit, first decide what outcome you’re aiming for.
3. Write your goal in the middle of a piece of paper and use  **Synapse Safari** to brainstorm daily habits that could help you. Pick one that feels valuable, and like something you can realistically do every day.
4. Get a calendar, notebook, or habit-tracking app and visually mark each day you complete the habit.
5. Consider picking a specific time to complete your habit each day, and scheduling it with  **Time Blocking**. Anchoring your habit to an existing part of your routine – for example, immediately after lunch – can also help you keep your chain unbroken.
6. When scheduling new tasks or accepting new invitations, always consider whether this will cause you to break your chain. Be flexible when you need to – if you have a commitment that clashes with your usual slot, find another time to do it. Commit to keeping your chain unbroken, whatever it takes.

*Tip: if you miss a day, don’t be too hard on yourself. The goal is progress, not perfection.*





# Eisenhower Matrix

**Decide which tasks to do and which to delete, delegate or delay, so you can make progress on the stuff that really matters.**

It's all too easy to be 'busy' and still not get important work done. Use this tactic any time your to-do list gets unwieldy, or when tackling a new project.

*"In preparing for battle I have always found that plans are useless, but planning is indispensable."* – Dwight D. Eisenhower



Once you've identified your most important tasks, use tactics like  **3–3–3** and  **Pomodoro** to get them done.


## Eisenhower Matrix

1. List any tasks that require your time or attention. Don't worry about sorting them yet; just get everything out of your head and onto sticky notes.
2. Create a 2x2 grid, labelling the columns *Urgent* and *Not Urgent* and the rows *Important* and *Not Important*.


	<i>Urgent</i>	<i>Not Urgent</i>
<i>Important</i>		
<i>Not Important</i>		

3. Place each task from your list into one of the four quadrants based on its urgency and importance.
4. Take action:

**Quadrant 1 (Urgent and Important):** prioritise these tasks. If they will take 2 minutes or less, do them now. Otherwise, carve out space with  **Time Blocking**. Break anything too big to estimate how much time it'll take into smaller tasks with  **Synapse Safari**.

**Quadrant 2 (Not Urgent but Important):** schedule time further ahead to address these tasks with  **Time Blocking**. Set yourself a reasonable deadline and stick to it.

**Quadrant 3 (Urgent but Not Important):** these tasks are probably just 'busywork'. If nothing bad would happen if you didn't complete them, take them off your list. Otherwise, look for ways to automate or delegate these tasks.

**Quadrant 4 (Not Urgent and Not Important):** eliminate these, and hunt down anything similar with  **Kill It With Fire**.



# Single-Task Superhero

**Tackle one task at a time to force focus and keep your dopamine flowing.**

There are lots of ways to structure a to-do list, but most of them are just procrastination in disguise. This ridiculously simple approach cuts straight to the chase, so you can smash through the tasks worth doing.

Use it any time you have more than one task to do.

Make a solid plan with 📌 **Kanban** first, and try 🌟 **Mindful Mojo** or 🌟 **One-Minute Breathing** before you get to work.

## Single-Task Superhero

1. Identify your next most important task (NMIT).

This should be the one item on your to do list that, when completed, will provide the most significant progress (or relief).

2. Write your NMIT task down.

3. Immerse yourself in your NMIT for up to 45 minutes, devoting your full attention and effort to its completion.

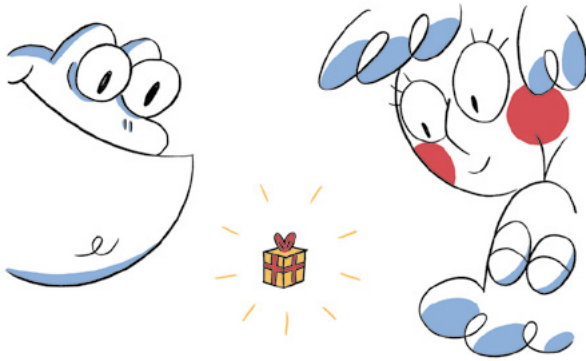
Resist the temptation to multitask or switch to another task before you've finished.

If you find you're struggling to avoid distractions, get setup with 🌟 **Focus Fortress**.

4. Take a short break. Stay hydrated. Use 🌟 **Nimble Eyes**, **Nimble Mind** if you're feeling any eye strain.

5. If your NMIT isn't complete, continue working on it for up to 45 minutes, then take another break. Repeat this cycle up to four times a day.

If it is complete, return to step 1 and continue getting stuff done.



# Tiny Rewards

**Reward yourself with small treats after completing urgent or important tasks to stay motivated and maintain momentum.**

Positive reinforcement is powerful – it can help habits stick and encourage you to keep showing up. This tactic includes a few suggested rewards to get you started – use it whenever your productivity needs a boost.

*“Don’t watch the clock; do what it does. Keep going.”*

– Sam Levenson

First, create a clear roadmap for your day with ✿ **Time Blocking** or ✿ **3–3–3**.

## Tiny Rewards

1. Choose your rewards for the day ahead. Pick small, enjoyable treats that will genuinely motivate you. These could be anything from a few mouthfuls of your favourite snack to a quick dance break or reading a book for five minutes.

If you’re expecting to hit a major milestone, allow yourself a bigger treat.

Stuck for reward ideas? Brainstorm some with ✿ **Synapse Safari**.

Alternatively, resolve to do something kind for someone else – this could be as simple as praising their contribution on a recent project. You might be surprised how rewarding this feels.

2. Complete a task from your list, putting in your best effort and staying focussed for at least 25 minutes.
3. Bask in your success and claim your Tiny Reward! Savour the satisfaction of a job well done, and let the positive reinforcement keep you motivated as you tackle your next task.

*Tip: whenever you’re bored of your regular rewards or snacked-out, you can use ✿ **Mindful Mojo** as your fallback. The more you do it, the more you’ll look forward to these moments of presence. Keep it interesting by finding different spots to practise – on the stairs, under the dining table, or perhaps halfway up a nearby tree.*



# Out Of Order

**Dive straight into the middle of your task to kick-start your creative flow.**

Jump into the heart of the matter and leave the introduction for later to avoid the page-one paralysis that often haunts the first few steps. Use this tactic to write emails, presentations or anything else that leaves you staring blankly at the start line.

*“The secret of getting ahead is getting started.” – Mark Twain*

Warm up your brain first with ✦ *Nimble Eyes, Nimble Mind* or

✦ *Laugh Out Loud*.

## Out Of Order

1. Identify a few sections of your task – some key messages for an email or the critical points in a presentation, for example. Use ✦ *Synapse Safari* if you're stuck.
2. Pick a section in the middle and dive right in.
3. As you gain momentum, continue working on other sections in any order that feels comfortable. Embrace the creative chaos by allowing yourself to jump between sections as inspiration strikes.
4. Finally, once you've tackled the meat of your task, return to the beginning and tie up the ending. You'll find that with the central stuff in place, this is a breeze.

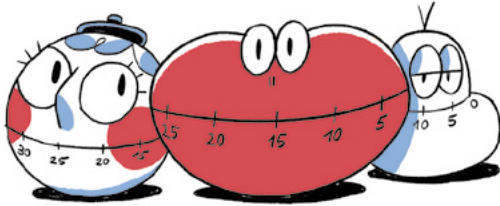
### Example:

*Zara's working on a presentation about the positive impact of adopting rescue pets. She breaks it down into core sections: the benefits of adoption, heart-warming success stories, the adoption process. She jots these down on colourful sticky notes, arranging them on her desk like a collage.*

*Next, she chooses a section that piques her interest – perhaps the heart-warming stories – and begins by describing how Winky the one-eyed cat found a loving home and became a social media sensation.*

*Once she's painted a vivid picture of pet adoption, it's time to craft a captivating introduction and conclusion. Perhaps she'll open with an anecdote about her own rescue dog, Lord Wigglebottom, and the profound impact he's had on her life.*





# Pomodoro

**Split your day into focussed 25-minute bursts of work, followed by short breaks, so that you maintain peak mental performance and get more done in less time.**

Break your work into manageable intervals so you're better equipped to tackle tasks without succumbing to distractions or burnout. You can use this tactic daily.

*"If you don't pay attention to what has your attention, it will take more of your attention than it deserves."* – David Allen

## Pomodoro

1. Pick a task you need to complete, set a timer for 25 minutes and start work. This focussed time is your first 'Pomodoro' – no distractions allowed!
2. Once the timer rings, congratulate yourself on completing a Pomodoro and take a five-minute break to recharge.
3. Repeat steps 1 and 2 three more times, completing four Pomodoros in total.

Remember to take a five-minute break after each Pomodoro.

4. After your fourth Pomodoro, you've earned a longer break (and maybe a ★ **Tiny Reward!**). Take a 15–30 minute break to rest, rejuvenate and prepare yourself for the next Pomodoro session.

If your eyes are getting tired or your brainpower is dropping, try ★ **Nimble Eyes, Nimble Mind**.

5. Keep this pattern going until your work is done, and bask in productive glory.

*Tip: choose a timer that is specifically designated for your Pomodoro sessions, whether it's a physical tomato-shaped timer ('pomodoro' is Italian for tomato; Francesco Cirillo used a tomato-shaped kitchen timer while developing this technique), or a dedicated digital tool. This helps you create a sense of ritual around your productivity sessions.*







# Productive Procrastination

**Use time well when you're struggling to focus so you don't end up in a self-defeating spiral of guilt.**

We're not robots – we can't be equally productive every day, and sometimes a little procrastination is actually what we need. In these moments, we can still use our time well, by doing things that nourish us or ticking off simpler to-dos. Use this tactic when you don't have the brainpower an important task demands right now.

If you feel like procrastination is getting out of control, try  **Energy Audit** to understand how your work's affecting you.

## Productive Procrastination

1. First, recognise the signs that you're hitting a mental wall, such as feeling overwhelmed, unfocussed or irritable. This self-awareness is crucial for making the most of Productive Procrastination.
2. Based on your mental state, do one of the following:
  - Cross some simpler items off your to-do list.
  - Choose an activity that rejuvenates your mind or body, like going for a walk.
  - Allow your mind to wander freely and note down any intriguing ideas that bubble up in your  **Spark File**.
3. Set a time limit for your Productive Procrastination session. This could be anywhere from 15 minutes to an hour, depending on your needs and schedule.
4. Once you've completed your chosen activity, take a few deep breaths and check into how you feel. Do you feel calmer, less stressed or more optimistic?

If you're still not ready to tackle your main task, consider repeating steps 2 and 3.

However, if you feel recharged, focussed or inspired, it's time to jump back into your work with renewed energy and a clearer mind.

Remember, the goal is to regain productivity and creativity, not to avoid work indefinitely!



# Spark File

**Capture fleeting thoughts and build a treasure trove of inspiration.**

Intriguing ideas and unexpected ‘a-ha!’ moments don’t usually respect our schedules, but they can help fuel our most successful projects. That’s why it’s important to capture them when they arrive – otherwise they might be lost forever. Keep your file accessible at all times.

*“Write down the thoughts of the moment. Those that come unsought for are commonly the most valuable.” – Francis Bacon*

*“If at first the idea is not absurd, then there is no hope for it.” – Albert Einstein*

## Spark File

1. First, choose your Spark File medium. Whether it’s a physical notebook, a digital tool, or a voice recording app, find something that suits your style and is easily accessible, wherever you are.

If you decide on a physical notebook, keep it with you at all times.

2. Remind yourself that no idea is too small, weird or seemingly purposeless.

When a thought or observation pops into your head, record it in your Spark File without judgment.

3. Organise your ideas, if needed. If you prefer a more structured approach, consider adding categories or tags to your entries. This will make it easier to find relevant ideas later on.

You may find, however, that keeping things a little messy helps you make unexpected connections between ideas.

4. Make it a habit to review your Spark File periodically. It’s like a surprise party for your brain; revisit your past ideas and let them inspire your current projects.

You never know when one of those random thoughts will become the catalyst for your next big breakthrough.



# Synapse Safari

**Capture ideas and organise them visually with a branching, tree-like structure so you can make sense of your thoughts and tasks.**

Mind maps are a timeless and infinitely flexible tool for making ideas easy to work with.

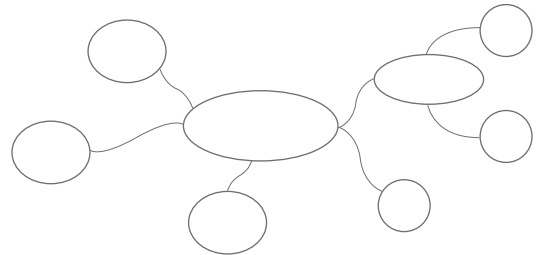
Use this tactic when you want to take visual notes, brainstorm, or understand how a bunch of tasks connect within a project.

*“Creativity is just connecting things.”* – Steve Jobs

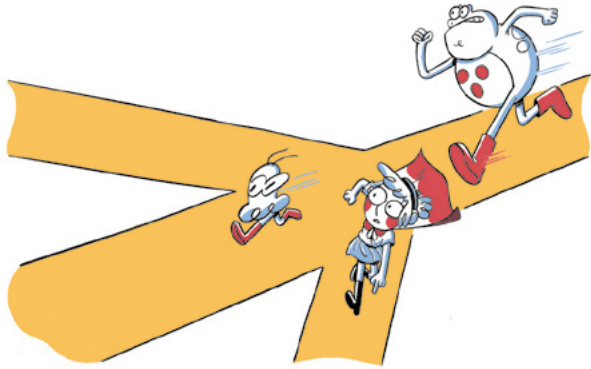
## Synapse Safari

1. First, pick your central theme. Whether it's a project, problem, idea or goal, write it down in the centre of your page or digital canvas, then draw a circle around it.
2. Draw branches radiating out from the central theme, and label each branch with a keyword or short phrase. These branches can represent the primary categories of your topic, or ideas connected to your starting point.
3. Now, add sub-branches. Continue branching outwards for each idea, creating a structure that visually represents the relationships between your thoughts.

You should end up with something like this:



4. Review and refine your mind map. Add colours, images, or symbols to enrich the meaning.
5. If useful, revisit and update your mind map to reflect new insights and ideas, keeping it as a living, evolving representation of your thought process.



# Decision Dash

**Make speedy group decisions in a 45-minute workshop so that your projects don't get blocked.**

Create a sense of urgency to avoid endless debates. Use this tactic whenever a key decision holds things up.

*"Indecision is the thief of opportunity."* – Jim Rohn

Try ★ **Synapse Safari** beforehand to visualise the different components of the important decision you need to make.

## Decision Dash

1. Identify a key decision that needs to be made. Clearly define the issue; ensure everyone involved understands its importance and scope.
2. Divide participants into pairs, or teams of five or less. Assign each team a specific aspect of the decision to explore. Example:  
  
*"Team A, you'll analyse the financial implications; Team B, you'll focus on the impact on our team; and Team C, you'll consider potential customer reactions."*
3. Ask each team to discuss the decision through their specific lens (10 mins).
4. Get each team to write down as many potential ways forward as they can on sticky notes, even if they seem unconventional (5 mins).
5. Invite each team to discuss their ideas among themselves (5 mins), then ask them to share their best solution with everyone (2 mins per team).
6. Drawing on what they've heard, ask people to individually come up with a solution that takes all the perspectives into account. Make sure they're clearly written and unambiguous.
7. Display all the solutions and assign each one a letter. Ask everyone to privately score them from 1 (bad) to 10 (brilliant). Collect and tally the scores – the highest overall score wins. If there's no clear winner, repeat the scoring exercise for the top three solutions.



# Single Step

**Tackle the smallest possible piece of a daunting task to stop it overwhelming you.**

This technique is perfect for those moments when you feel paralysed by the size or complexity of a task and need a simple way to get started.

*"Amateurs sit and wait for inspiration; the rest of us just get up and go to work."* – Stephen King

*"A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step."*  
– Laozi

If you're struggling to get started but this tactic doesn't resonate, try  
✱ **Out Of Order**. Still stuck? Try ✱ **Productive Procrastination**.

## Single Step

1. Break your task down into its constituent parts. You can use ✱ **Synapse Safari** for this if you like.
2. Identify the smallest, most achievable action you can take to make progress on the task.

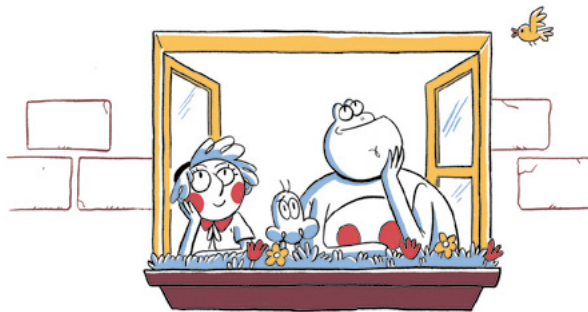
Example:

*"I need to write a blog post. I can start by reading one article on a related topic and jotting down three interesting points."*

3. Complete the small action immediately, without allowing yourself to get distracted or second-guessing the decision.
4. Once you've completed the initial step, use the momentum you've gained to continue making progress on the task.

Repeat the process of breaking down the task into smaller actions until you reach your goal.

**Optional bonus:** reward yourself for getting started.  
✱ **Tiny Rewards** can help.



# Daydream Station

**Schedule daydreaming sessions to unlock new ideas and refresh your brain.**

We feel more guilty about staring out of the window, alone with our thoughts, than we do sitting in pointless meetings or repeatedly checking emails. But when we let our minds wander, our brain's Default Mode Network comes alive, perfect for creative thinking, problem-solving and long-term planning. Use this tactic regularly to keep your mind flexible and your soul alive.

*“Daydreaming is a strategic rebellion against the excessive demands of immediate (but ultimately insignificant) pressures.” – School of Life*

## Daydream Station

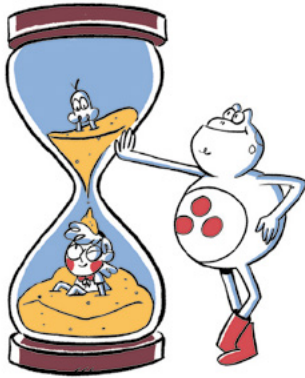
1. Pick a day and time for your daydreaming session and add it to your calendar – see ✦ **Time Blocking**. It can be as long or short as you like – 20 minutes is a good starting point.
2. Don't accept new invitations or commitments that will interfere with your session.

If you're a leader, set the example that 'thinking time' is a valid and valuable thing to have in your calendar. Normalise the idea that 'doing time' is only one slice of the productivity pie.

3. When it's time for your session, find a comfortable and relaxing environment where you can let your thoughts roam free. This could be your favourite armchair, a local park, or a cozy corner in a coffee shop.
4. Allow your mind to wander during your daydreaming session. Don't try to control or direct your thoughts; just let them flow naturally.
5. Keep a notebook or digital tool nearby to capture any interesting ideas, insights or solutions that arise during your daydreaming – see ✦ **Spark File**.

Don't feel guilty if no useful ideas emerge – when you practise daydreaming consistently, your brain will become more comfortable and creative in these sessions.

And if nothing else, you've had a cognitive palate cleanser that will free you up to focus fully on your next important task.




# Two-Minute Taskmaster

**Complete tasks that take two minutes or less immediately to stop them distracting you.**

This card helps you break the habit of delaying small tasks, so they don't start piling up. Use it every day.

*"If you want to make an easy job seem mighty hard, just keep putting off doing it." – Olin Miller*

Use  **Open Loops** with this tactic to identify and clear any in-progress tasks or pre-existing to-dos that you can do in two minutes.


## Two-Minute Taskmaster

1. When a new task arises, take a moment to assess whether it can be completed in two minutes or less.

This could be a new request from someone, or simply something that you notice needs your attention.

For example, a colleague asks you to send them an important document or you remember you need to book a dentist appointment.

2. If the task will take 2 minutes or less, tackle it immediately. Like, right this second.

If it will take longer, add it to your  **Kanban** board or set yourself a reminder for when it needs completing. You may find it useful to have separate boards for work and personal tasks.

3. As you complete these quick tasks, notice the time saved and the mental energy preserved by not putting them off.

*Tip: make the two-minute rule a habit in your daily life. You'll get better at quickly spotting and completing small tasks as the days go on, and you'll have extra energy to tackle more demanding work.*





# Power Hours

Find your peak productivity times so you can schedule tasks mindfully and achieve more.





The 9–5 is old news. Humans have a natural rhythm that shifts between alertness and ease, and most people can't use their brains intensively for more than four hours a day without a big dip in the quality of their work.

Try this tactic if your current schedule is draining your energy and not making the most of your brainpower.

## Power Hours

1. Observe: for one week, jot down your energy levels (out of 10) and the tasks you're working on once an hour.

Hour	Task	Energy level (1-10)
9am	emails and admin	7

2. Reflect: what patterns do you notice in your energy levels? Are there any specific times or days when you feel more focussed? Do your Power Hours align with specific tasks or types of work?
3. Remove: are there non-essential meetings or low-value tasks in your schedule that are blocking you from making the most of your Power Hours? Get rid of them with  **Meeting Mincer** or  **Kill It With Fire**.
4. Rearrange: use  **Time Blocking** to rearrange your work schedule, assigning tasks that require deep focus or creativity to your peak productivity times.
5. Protect: use  **Communication Canvas** to signal your communication preferences to colleagues, so you're not disturbed during your Power Hours.

*Tip: continue observing your productivity and energy levels, and stay open to adjustments and fine-tuning.*






# Winventory

## List and celebrate your wins to stay motivated.

Focus on the positives and celebrate even the smallest victories, so you'll be more inclined to continue to pursue your goals and develop beneficial habits.

Use this tactic weekly, monthly or annually.

*"Success is the sum of small efforts, repeated day in day out."*  
– Robert Collier

You can refer to your win list when doing a  **Ritual Recalibration**, writing  **Weeknotes** and exploring your  **Ikigai**.

## Winventory

1. Choose your timeframe – decide if you want to reflect on your wins from the past week, month or year.
2. Grab a pen and paper, open a digital document, or use a dedicated app to list your wins.


The key is to have a designated space to record your accomplishments.

3. Think back on your chosen timeframe and list all the wins you can remember.

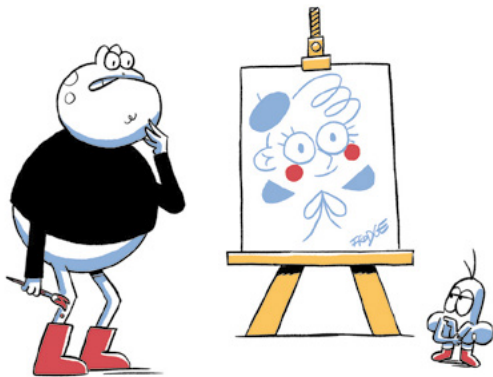
These can be outcomes you achieved, habits you maintained, praise you received or challenges you overcame.

Don't be shy; no win is too small!

4. Take a moment to review your list and appreciate your achievements.

Use this positive energy to fuel your motivation, reinforce good habits, and set new  **SMART Goals** for the future.

*Tip: keep your Winventory handy and review it whenever you need a confidence boost.*





# Get Feedback

**Get feedback from your peers to improve your work and grow yourself.**

Embrace constructive criticism and creative input to work more effectively (which is what productivity's really about). This tactic gives you proven feedback frameworks, so you can continually learn and improve. Use it as much as you can.

*"Remind yourself that an accurate criticism is the most valuable feedback you can receive."* – Ray Dalio

Use this tactic regularly to help you run a more insightful  **Captain Hindsight** and even give you signals about your  **Ikigai**.


## Get Feedback

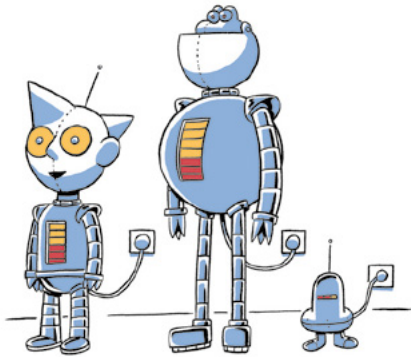
1. Decide on a feedback framework that resonates with you and the context of your work:

**Start/Stop/Continue:** ask for suggestions on what you should start doing, stop doing, and continue doing to be more effective.

**Rose/Thorn/Bud:** in this approach, 'rose' represents something positive or a success, 'thorn' signifies challenges or areas for improvement, and 'bud' refers to potential opportunities.

**Glow/Grow:** the 'glow' aspect focuses on your strengths and achievements, while the 'grow' element highlights areas where you can develop or improve further.

2. Pick colleagues, mentors, customers or other relevant individuals who can provide valuable feedback on your work or performance.
3. Share the chosen framework with them, clearly explaining what you want feedback on. It might help to share any relevant  **SMART Goals** or other context for the work if they don't already have this information. Encourage them to be honest and specific in their responses.
4. Thank them and review the feedback you receive. Identify patterns and areas for improvement. Pay particular attention to suggested weaknesses or constructive criticism – these are your biggest opportunities to learn. But remember, you don't necessarily have to follow their recommendations.
5. Refine your work or make an action plan based on what you hear.




# Energy Audit


**Reflect on recent tasks to identify energy patterns and fine-tune your schedule.**

Understand how tasks affect your energy levels to maintain productivity and prevent burnout. This card helps you pinpoint activities that excite, drain or demand recovery time, so you can make well-informed scheduling decisions. Use it at the end of a busy week.




*“Almost everything will work again if you unplug it for a few minutes, including you.” – Anne Lamott*

It is easy to review how you've spent your time if you use  **Time Blocking** to organise your calendar.

## Energy Audit

1. First, centre yourself with  **Mindful Mojo**.
2. Think about the tasks you completed over the last week and how each one affected your energy levels.
3. Name each task and write it on a sticky note.
4. Write these three headings down:
  - Energising
  - Draining
  - Enjoyable but exhausting
5. Move each sticky note under the heading that best describes how the task felt for you, energy-wise.
6. Take a moment to digest the exercise. Are there any patterns? Do certain tasks have an outsized impact on your energy? Have you discovered anything new about your relationship with your work?
7. Use your newfound awareness to adjust your schedule for better energy management.

Plan recovery periods after exhausting tasks, and balance draining activities with energising ones to maximise your productivity throughout the day.

*Tip: if there are more draining tasks than energising or enjoyable tasks in your schedule, try  **Kill It With Fire**. If this doesn't solve the problem, there might be deeper issues – in that case, make some time for  **Ikigai** and give the universe a friendly nudge with  **Wonder Beam**.*



# Ritual Recalibration

**Check into your daily rituals to see what's working and what needs to change.**

This card helps you stay focussed, make necessary changes and maintain progress towards your goals. You can return to this exercise every three months or so.

*"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit."* – Will Durrant

Get clear on your  **SMART Goals** first and try  **Ikigai** if you get stuck at step one. Celebrate sticking to useful rituals with  **Winventory**.

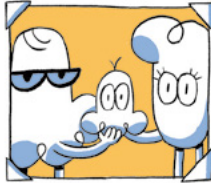
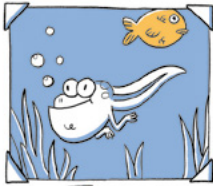
## Ritual Recalibration

1. Ask yourself "What am I optimising for?". What goals or ambitions are you currently organising your days around? Take a few minutes to reflect on this, then write the answer down.
2. What daily or recurring habits are you engaged in at the moment? List your current rituals on sticky notes.
3. Reflect on each ritual and how well it's serving you. Write down the headings: *Patience*, *Change* and *Job Done*.
4. Do any rituals still feel right, but need more time to yield results? Move those under the *Patience* heading.

Are there any current habits that aren't helping you make progress towards a worthwhile goal? Move those under the *Change* heading.

Are there any that were great for a while, but aren't needed anymore? Put them under *Job Done*.

5. Review the rituals under *Change*. Decide whether to tweak or retire these. Update your plans accordingly.
6. Delete any calendar events or other cues in your environment related to rituals that you don't plan to continue with.
7. Are there any new rituals that might help you, based on your answer to the question in step one? Now's your chance to experiment.



# Captain Hindsight


**Reflect on the effectiveness of your work, and the systems supporting it, so you can continually improve.**

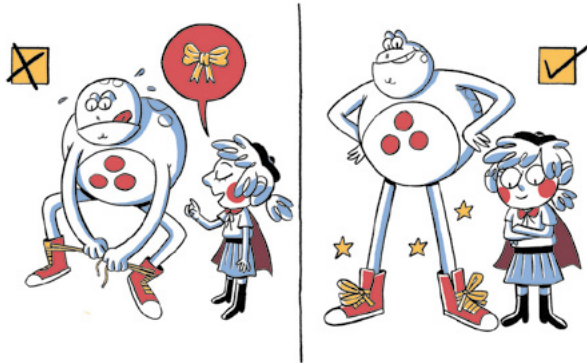
Whether you work with a team or on your own, regularly reflect on what you've been doing to spot opportunities to do things better. Use this tactic after major milestones or completed projects, or make it a recurring part of your routine.

*"Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts."* – Winston Churchill

Get clear on your  **SMART Goals** first, and consider running a  **Progress Check** before your Captain Hindsight to be fully-informed.

## Captain Hindsight

1. Set aside up to one hour, completely free from distractions for your session. Make it clear this is a space for honest reflection; it's never about finding someone to blame.
2. Collect any relevant notes, feedback or data related to the work you're reviewing.
3. Choose a retrospective framework to guide your reflection:
  - **Liked, Learned, Lacked, Longed For:** focusses on emotions, learning experiences, shortcomings and desires.
  - **Stop, Start, Continue:** evaluates what you should stop doing, start doing and keep doing.
  - **Wins, Challenges, Opportunities:** highlights your achievements, difficulties and potential areas for growth.
4. Write the headings from the title of your chosen framework on paper, a whiteboard or a digital document.
5. Spend 5–10 minutes individually listing examples or observations under each heading.
6. If you're doing this with a team, invite each team member to share their thoughts. Spend up to 15 minutes discussing common themes, then identify areas where you can improve or do something new.
7. Use  **Synapse Safari** to individually generate ideas for what you might do differently in future – everyone writes the same theme or problem in the middle, then brainstorms from there.
8. Let everyone share their single strongest idea, then capture these on your workspace.



# Progress Check




**Review your progress to stay motivated when you're doing well and make changes when you're behind.**

Progress towards goals is rarely linear, but it's important to keep an eye on how you're doing. This card helps you figure out whether you need to attack a goal harder, remove obstacles, pivot or simply keep going. Make it part of your monthly routine.

*"Success is often just a matter of hanging on after others have let go."* – Tim Ferriss

First, choose the goal you want to review progress against.  **SMART Goals** is your go-to tactic for defining goals at every scale.

## Progress Check

1. Clarify any key performance indicators (KPIs) or milestones related to your goal. These will serve as your yardsticks for progress. Keep it simple – no more than five KPIs.
2. Rate your progress on five-step scale for each KPI or milestone:
  1. No progress at all
  2. Minimal progress
  3. Some progress, but not enough
  4. Good progress
  5. Amazing progress, beyond expectations
3. Reflect with these questions:
  - Are you consistently meeting or exceeding your KPIs?
  - If not, are there any obstacles or challenges that hindered your progress?
  - Are you investing enough time and effort to achieve your goal?
  - Do external factors or changes in your priorities warrant reconsidering your goal?
4. Based on your reflections, you have a few choices:
  - Continue what you're doing.
  - Invest extra time or effort.
  - Remove obstacles or ask for support.
  - Redefine your goal and adjust plans accordingly.
5. If necessary, update your  **Kanban** board and  **Weekly Focus** based on the results of this exercise. If you're on course, add to your  **Winventory** and keep going!






# Weeknotes

**Document your weekly experiences to deepen your learning and share insights with others.**

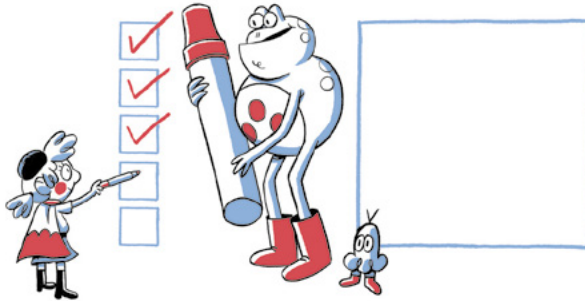
A regular writing practice has countless benefits. Use this tactic every week to stay mindful of your progress, learn from your experiences and maintain a record of your journey.

*“Productivity, for me, is... about effectiveness – how to use the finite resources of time, energy, and attention to create the greatest possible value in the world.” – Maria Popova*

Consider making this a regular routine in your  **Communication Canvas**. Refer to your  **Kanban** to remind yourself what you did this week.

## Weeknotes

1. Schedule a recurring 30-minute Weeknotes session in your calendar towards of the end of your week.
2. Choose a medium for your Weeknotes: a physical journal, a digital document, a public blog or newsletter, or an internal email.
3. Each week, write a summary of what happened. You can use the following headings to structure your writing: Highlights, Lowlights, Lessons Learned. The precise format is up to you; make it your own!
4. Use these prompts to guide your thinking:
  - What went well this week? What could have gone better?
  - What did you learn? What surprised you?
  - Which relationships or connections were most meaningful this week? Why?
  - Did you experience any ‘a-ha!’ moments or breakthroughs?
  - What brought you joy or satisfaction? What left you feeling unfulfilled?
  - How did your actions align with your values or long-term goals this week?
  - Were there any moments of personal growth, self-discovery or introspection?
  - In what ways did you step out of your comfort zone? How did that feel?
  - Did you encounter any ethical or moral dilemmas? How did you navigate them?
  - What are you grateful for this week? How can you cultivate more gratitude?
  - How did your work or experiences this week contribute to your personal sense of purpose or mission?
  - If you were to write a letter to your past self about this week, what advice or insights would you share?





# Open Loops

**Complete half-finished tasks and low-effort to-dos so you can focus on the big stuff.**




Our brains fixate on unresolved things. It's why we can't resist cliff-hangers, and we get songs we only heard half of stuck in our heads. Open loops are bad news for productivity – grab this card when it's time to declutter.

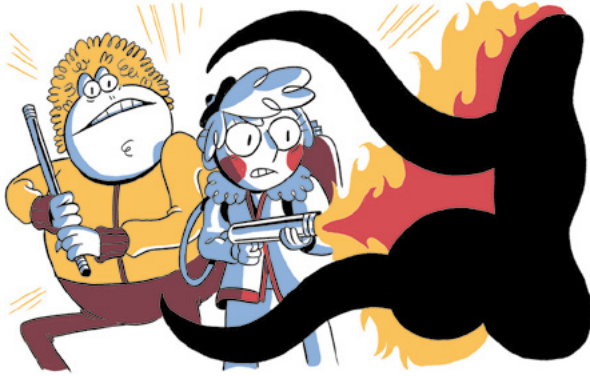
*"Your mind is for having ideas, not holding them."*

– David Allen

Apply the  **Two-Minute Taskmaster** rule to all your open loops. Use your  **Spark File** liberally so new ideas don't weigh you down.

## Open Loops

1. Start with your immediate environment; jot down any visible unfinished tasks/projects on sticky notes.
2. Review inboxes, to-do lists, calendars,  **Kanban** boards and anywhere else you take notes or plan work for lingering action items. Capture any open loops on sticky notes.
3. Think about your personal life – are there any open loops here? For example, is there a bill that needs paying or an appointment that needs booking? Capture on sticky notes in a different colour.
4. Consider any long-term  **SMART Goals** or aspirations that you've yet to make progress on. Have any dreams or plans been on the backburner? Pick another colour and add these as sticky notes.
5. If there are any open loops that you can tackle in two minutes or less, do that now.
6. For everything else, assign a score from 1 (low) to 3 (high) for each: urgency; importance; mental energy required. Add the scores for each category to obtain a total score ranging from three (lowest priority) to nine (highest priority). Order your open loops from highest total scores (at the top) to lowest (bottom).
7. Take one of these actions for each open loop:
  - Schedule a specific time to address it with  **Time Blocking**, or set yourself a reminder.
  - If it can be assigned to someone else, delegate the task.
  - If the open loop is of low priority (score 3–4) and has little consequence, consider dropping it altogether.



# Kill It With Fire

**Ruthlessly remove non-essential tasks from your schedule to free up time and headspace for your real priorities.**

Discard time-consuming, low-value activities so you can channel your focus and maximise your impact.

Use this tactic regularly to ensure there's always space for deep work in your calendar.




*"Focus is about saying no."* – Steve Jobs

Make sure you're clear on your  **SMART Goals** first, so you can make informed decisions about which tasks to kill and which to keep.

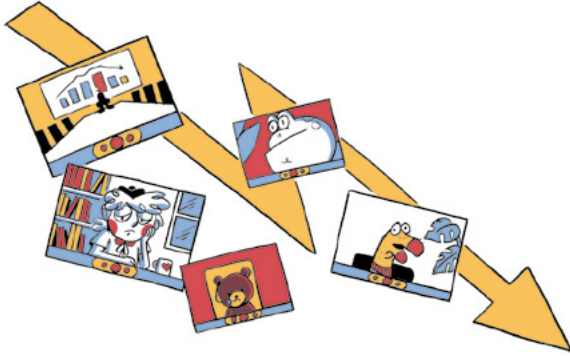
## Kill It With Fire

1. List any *recurring* tasks in your schedule – sending a weekly status report, for example.
2. List any *new* tasks that have recently been added to your schedule that you're not at least 90% sure will be worth your time.
3. Scrutinise each item on your list, and ask yourself:
  - Is this task necessary for achieving my goals?
  - What would happen if I stopped doing this task altogether?
  - Can this task be automated or delegated?

Be ruthless in your assessment and look for opportunities to free up time and mental energy.

4. Remove whatever you can. Revisit your  **Communication Canvas** and make sure you inform anyone that needs to know about any changes.
5. Reorganise your calendar with  **Time Blocking** to make the most of the extra space.
6. If anything you decide to automate or delegate can be dealt with in two minutes or less, do it now. Otherwise, make an action plan for those and add the actions to your  **Kanban** board.

*Tip: learning to say 'no' respectfully is an essential productivity skill. Practise it, and you won't need this card as often.*



# Meeting Mincer

**Minimise meeting madness to reclaim valuable time.**

People spend hundreds of weeks in meetings over their careers, often losing precious hours that could be spent on more productive tasks.

Use this tactic to optimise your schedule and create an environment where people can get stuff done.


*“Beware the bareness of a busy life.” – Socrates*


Depending on your work culture, you may need to approach this card with caution. In all cases, communicate decisions respectfully.

## Meeting Mincer

1. Go through your calendar and note all recurring and scheduled meetings, including their purpose and attendees.
2. Ask yourself critical questions about each meeting. Be brutally honest.

For each meeting, consider:

- Is this meeting essential for achieving our goals?
  - Is this meeting consistently productive?
  - Is this meeting happening at the right frequency?
  - Would anyone complain if this meeting disappeared?
  - Can this meeting be replaced with a different communication method?
3. If there are any meetings that aren't essential or consistently useful, cancel them and explain the decision to invited attendees.
  4. If there are any that happen more often than necessary, adjust the frequency.
  5. Review and update your  **Communication Canvas** to reflect any changes in communication methods and any general policies around meetings that you want to introduce based on what emerged.

**Meeting hygiene:** in future, ensure that every meeting has a clear agenda and purpose. Outline discussion points and objectives beforehand, and use structured methods like  **Decision Dash** where possible to keep all sessions focussed and productive.



# Ikigai

**Uncover your Ikigai to align your life and work with your true passions and purpose.**

Ikigai, an ancient Japanese concept, is the intersection of what you love, what you're good at, what the world needs, and what you can be paid for. Use this tactic when you're seeking direction or motivation, or reassessing your life's path.

*"The happiest people are not the ones who achieve the most. They are the ones who spend more time than others in a state of flow."* – Hector Garcia Puigcerver

Warning: this card can cause career changes. Before you begin, find a quiet space and centre yourself with **Mindful Mojo**.

## Ikigai

1. Set aside at least an hour for deep reflection, free from distractions.
2. Ask yourself probing questions to explore the four key elements of Ikigai. Note down your thoughts:

### What do I love doing?

Example: *spending time in nature, painting, volunteering*

### What am I good at?

Example: *public speaking, problem-solving, teaching*

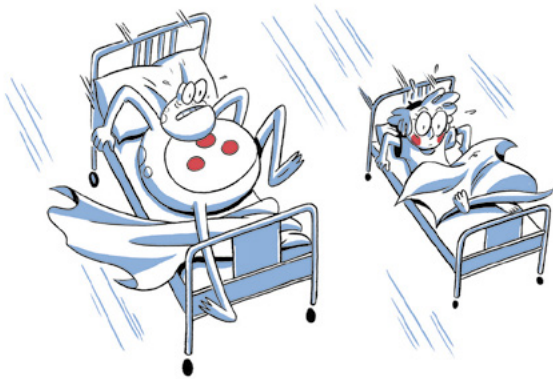
### What does the world need?

Example: *clean energy, mental health support, education*

### What can I be paid for?

Example: *consulting, writing*

3. Look for intersections between the elements. For example, how do your passions and skills connect? How could your skills help people? Which of your skills are most valuable in the market?
4. Write 'My Ikigai' on a piece of paper, then use **Synapse Safari** to explore ways you could combine all four elements – things you love, things you're good at, things the world needs, and things you can be paid for. Welcome ideas beyond your comfort zone.
5. What you do next is up to you. You might begin by radiating your newfound purpose with **Wonder Beam**. It's probably a good idea to sleep on it before making any drastic life changes, but beware of the creeping pull of business as usual.



# S.T.O.P

**Slow down for a brief mindful pause to re-energise yourself and do your best work.**

Are you suffering from 'hurry sickness'? Many of us feel an unspoken need to hurry through all life's tasks. This constant sense of urgency can be exhausting. It also undermines the quality of our work, and degrades our lived experience. Remember, it's almost never a bad time to pause and breathe.

*"Take a rest. A field that has rested gives a bountiful crop."*  
– Ovid

Leave this card visible on your desk for a regular reminder to take a pause.

# S.T.O.P

## 1. Stop.

Whatever you're doing, just pause for a moment.

## 2. Take a breath.

Breathe in, and breathe out.

The breath is your anchor to the present moment.

## 3. Observe. Notice what is happening.

What is happening inside you, and outside of you?  
Where has your mind gone? What do you feel?  
What are you doing?

## 4. Proceed.

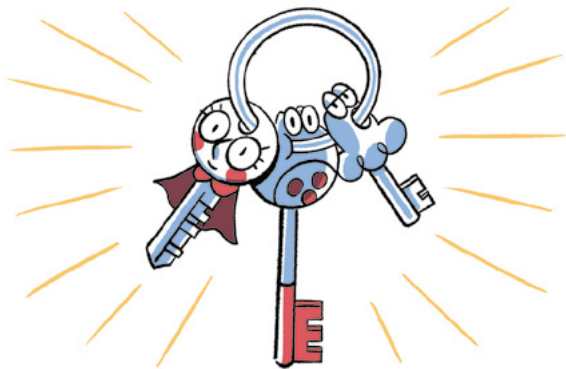
Continue doing what you were doing.

Or don't; use the insight gained during this check-in to change course.

Whatever you do, do it mindfully.

*Tip: this exercise may help you notice when your body is becoming tense – this lets you correct it before you are in pain. You might find that you're thirsty, hungry, or that a longer break might be helpful.*

*The more you S.T.O.P during the day, the more you re-engage with reality, and disengage from the habitual busyness of your mind.*



# Productivity Principles

Learn 11 key principles that will help you stay productive.

No single system works for everyone, but there are some universal principles that will serve you well. Return to this card any time you feel your productivity veering off course.

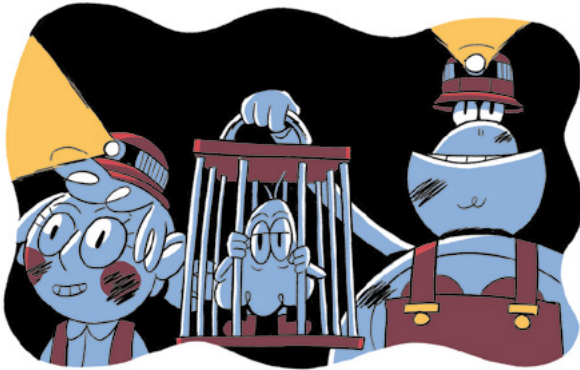
*“Your most important work is always ahead of you, never behind you.”* – Stephen Covey

Discover the tactics to help you stay productive, without burning out.

## Productivity Principles

1. Set clear, motivating, and realistic goals.  
*Go-to tactic:* 🗄️ **SMART Goals.**
2. Prioritise ruthlessly.  
*Go-to tactics:* 🗄️ **Eisenhower Matrix** and 🗄️ **Seinfeld System.**
3. Establish the right habits.  
*Go-to tactic:* 🗄️ **Ritual Recalibration.**
4. Manage your time purposefully.  
*Go-to tactic:* 🗄️ **Time Blocking.**
5. Minimise work in progress.  
*Go-to tactics:* 🗄️ **Kanban** and 🗄️ **One In, One Out.**
6. Avoid context-switching.  
*Go-to tactics:* 🗄️ **Single-Task Superhero** and 🗄️ **3–3–3.**
7. Eliminate distractions.  
*Go-to tactics:* 🗄️ **Focus Fortress** and 🗄️ **Weekly Focus.**
8. Make time for breaks and rest.  
*Go-to tactics:* 🗄️ **Daydream Station** and 🗄️ **Time Oasis.**
9. Celebrate milestones.  
*Go-to tactic:* 🗄️ **Winventory.**
10. Never stop learning.  
*Go-to tactics:* 🗄️ **Weeknotes** and 🗄️ **Get Feedback.**
11. Look after yourself.  
*Go-to tactics:* 🗄️ **Wellbeing 101** and 🗄️ **Monk Mode.**





# Canary In The Coalmine

**Identify your personal burnout signs so you know when to slow down or simplify.**

Don't let burnout creep up on you. This card helps you notice your personal red flags and correct your course before things get bad.

*"The time to relax is when you don't have time for it."*  
– Sydney J. Harris

If you need a hard reset right now, skip straight to @ **Monk Mode**.

## Canary In The Coalmine

1. Set aside some quiet time to think about past instances when you felt overwhelmed or burned out. With hindsight, can you identify any healthy habits or behaviours that suffered? For example, were you missing meals, skipping exercise, not getting enough sleep or withdrawing from social activities?

List these under the heading *Things that slip*.

2. How does imminent burnout feel for you? For example, constant fatigue, irritability, decreased motivation or difficulty concentrating?

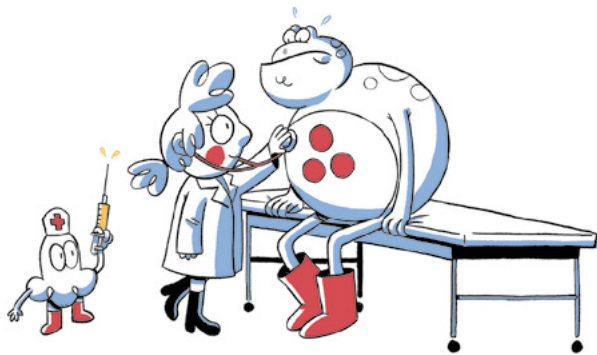
Write your observations under the heading *How it feels*.

3. Think about any other factors that contributed to the problem. For example, did you take on too many commitments, or were unfair demands made of you?

Record your reflections under the heading *What went wrong*.

4. Based on what's emerged, think about how you can protect yourself from burnout in future. Use 🌿 **Synapse Safari** to formulate your personal prescription.
5. If your workload is unsustainable, schedule a conversation with your manager or client to discuss and agree a way forward.

*Tip: if you're struggling to avoid or recover from burnout, talk to friends and family about it, and consider seeking professional help.*



# Wellbeing 101

**Check into your health and wellbeing basics so that you can stay balanced.**

We can't work productively when we're not looking after ourselves properly. This card distils evidence-based advice and helps you build healthier habits – come back to it any time your energy levels feel low.

*"Self-care is never a selfish act – it is simply good stewardship of the only gift I have, the gift I was put on earth to offer to others."* – Parker Palmer

Rate your habits from 1–10 for each of the pillars on the back of the card to see where you might be able to make a healthy change.

## Wellbeing 101

**Sleep:** aim for 7–9 hours per night. Establish a consistent sleep schedule and relaxing bedtime routine.

**Hydration:** drink 2–4 litres of water or herbal tea daily. Keep a water bottle nearby as a reminder. Pale yellow urine indicates proper hydration.

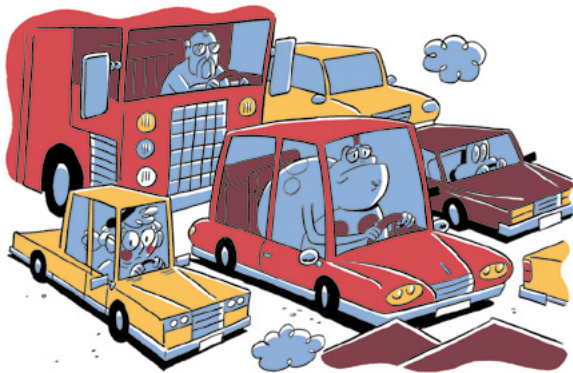
**Movement:** if you're able to, get moving for at least 2.5 hours every week with activities like brisk walking or cycling. If you prefer running, aim for at least 75 minutes per week. Try to include exercises that strengthen your muscles, like lifting weights or doing push-ups, at least twice per week.

**Time outdoors:** spend time outside daily, enjoying natural light, green spaces and fresh air. Get some morning sunlight if you can.

**Social connection:** maintain regular contact with friends and family, and participate in social activities. Consider attending local events or classes, or volunteering, to meet new people. Get to know your neighbours. Actively listen and show genuine interest in others.

**Nutrition:** eat a balanced diet rich in whole foods. Brain-friendly options include fatty fish, berries, nuts and seeds, and leafy greens. Try dark chocolate for a focus-enhancing treat. Limit processed foods and added sugars.

**Rest:** schedule regular downtime for relaxation and self-care. Find activities that nourish you creatively or spiritually (that have nothing to do with your work).



# Mindful Disruption

**Inject some novelty into your day to keep your thinking fresh.**

Routines are healthy, but too much repetition can feel stifling and lead you into creative ruts. That's why it's worth mindfully disrupting your routine once in a while – especially when you're working on new or open-ended problems that demand fresh creative thought.

## *Mindful Disruption*

1. Notice where your daily life feels repetitive or dull.

For example, maybe you're bored of eating the same breakfast every day or walking the same route during your afternoon break.

2. Pick an enjoyable way to mix things up.

For example, try a new breakfast recipe or morning workout, explore a different park or local attraction during lunch, or swap your regular TV show for a creative hobby in the evening.

3. Make your way through the day with one piece of your routine altered.

Try to stay as present as possible while engaged in any novel activity.

4. Decide whether to make the change permanent or continue with your routine as normal.

5. Return to this tactic whenever things start to feel a little stagnant, or you're searching for new ideas or insights.



# Monk Mode

**Step away from the whirlwind of modern life to break unhelpful habits and recharge your mind.**

Temporarily disconnect from technology and immerse yourself in nature and self-reflection to give your mind some much-needed space. Use this tactic if you feel overwhelmed, or simply as part of a mindful, balanced routine.

*“No valid plans for the future can be made by those who have no capacity for living now.” – Alan Watts*


Follow up this experience with  **Canary In The Coalmine** to keep burnout at bay.

## Monk Mode

1. Before entering *Monk Mode*, decide on its duration. If you're new to this practice, start with one day. If you're experienced, consider up to a week.
2. Put away or turn off your communication devices. If necessary, set a specific, limited time to check essential messages; avoid the temptation to browse aimlessly.
3. Inform friends, family and colleagues about your temporary disconnection, so they know not to expect an immediate response. Set an out-of-office if necessary.
4. During your *Monk Mode* period, engage in activities that help you relax, encourage a feeling of flow, and foster self-awareness.

Meditate, journal, take walks in nature, practice yoga or tai chi, read interesting books, prepare wholesome meals, learn a new skill or make art.

5. Reintegrate and reflect.

As you emerge from your cocoon and return to your everyday routine, reflect on your experience. Use  **Synapse Safari** to explore any insights or lessons – allow them to guide you on your journey ahead.

Commit to maintaining a balance between activity and stillness; embrace the art of living fully while honouring the power of mindful pauses.

Remember: *“Nature does not hurry, yet everything is accomplished.” – Lao Tzu*