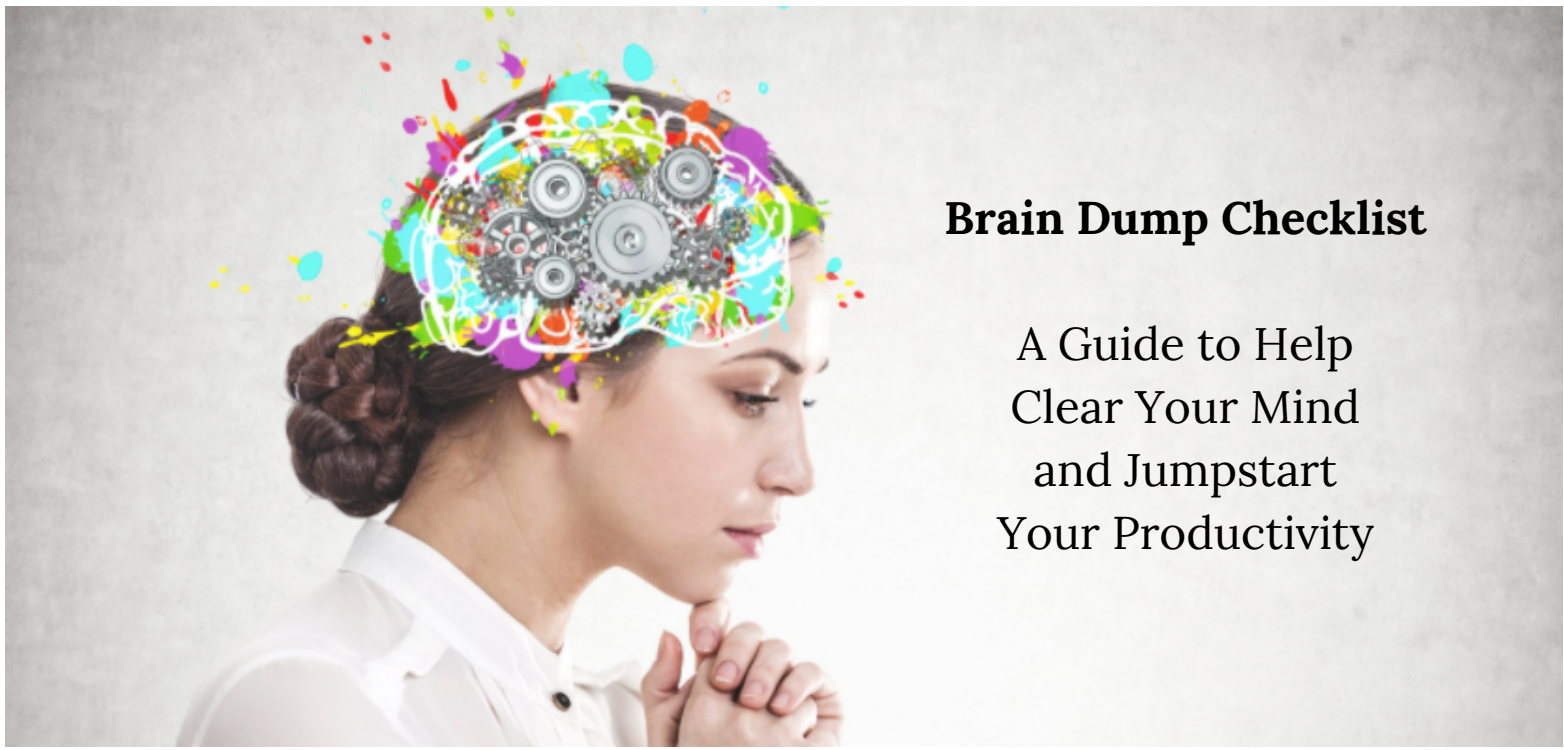




Brain Dump Checklist

A Guide to Help Clear Your Mind and Jumpstart Your Productivity

Congratulations on taking the first step to create more mental space and peace of mind by getting all the "to-do's" out of your head and into a list.

In this guide we'll cover:

- A quick start overview.
- A list of professional prompt questions.
- A list of personal prompt questions.
- Tips on how to process your brain dump.

Quick Start Overview

I don't want you to feel like getting started with the Empowered Productivity System is a daunting task, so if you feel overwhelmed, or if you can't carve out enough time to do it properly, there's a "shortcut" that will allow you to jump right in.

Start with either a blank piece of paper and a pen, a blank document on your computer, or a list you've already made. Then take just 5–10 minutes and jot down anything else that's on your mind right now. Set a timer for maybe 10 minutes, and just write down anything else you can think of that isn't already on your list— personally or professionally— until the timer goes off. Whatever you come up with should be enough to get you started. If you have trouble getting started, the prompts on pages 2 - 7 will help you.



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Brain Dump Checklist

Prompt Questions for your Professional To-Do's

Professional Prompt Questions - Part 1 of 3

What professional projects have you begun, but not completed?

What projects do you need to begin?

Administration: Anything you need to do around:

- legal issues?
- insurance?
- personnel?
- policies/procedures?

What commitments have you made, places you'll be or things you'll do, to/with/for:

- colleagues?
- subordinates?
- superiors?
- other people within your organization?
- customers?
- other professionals?
- other organizations?

Do you owe communications to anyone:

- within your organization?
- outside your organization?

Do you need to initiate or respond to any pressing:

- email?
- phone calls?
- letters?
- blog comments?
- social media?

Do you have any writing to complete or submit such as:

- reports?
- proposals?
- articles?
- manuals/instructions?
- evaluations/reviews?
- promotional materials?
- rewrites and edits?

Do you have any outstanding commitments around meetings:

- to attend?
- to request?
- to arrange
- to plan or prepare for?

Do you need to inform others about decisions you've made:

- in emails?
- by phone?
- in meetings?

Do you have anything important/significant to read, review, or edit?

Do you have any outstanding business financial issues, such as:

- cash flow?
- budgets?
- statistics?
- financial projections?
- petty cash?
- balance sheets?
- banking business?
- credit line?
- receivables?
- payables?



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Prompt Questions for your Professional To-Do's

Professional Prompt Questions - Part 2 of 3

Do you have any formal planning and organizing to do, such as for:

- goals and objectives?
- current projects?
- future projects?
- business/marketing plans?
- organizational initiatives?
- organizational structuring?
- upcoming events/meetings?
- presentations?
- installation of new systems/hardware/software/other equipment?

Do you have any outstanding customer service issues?

Do you have anything do to around marketing, advertising, promotion, or sales?

What's the status of your inventories, such as:

- personal supplies?
- office/site supplies?
- company parts or products?

Are there any issues for you around systems, such as:

- phones?
- computers?
- website?
- network?

Do you have anything to do around utilities, such as:

- filing?
- storage?
- furniture?
- decorations?

If you have travel coming up, do you need to:

- do any planning?
- obtain documentation?
- make arrangements?

Is there anything you're waiting for?

- Information from others?
- Completion of delegated tasks and projects?
- Completion of preparations needed to proceed with projects?
- Replies to:
 - Email?
 - Calls?
 - Letters?
 - Proposals?
- Requisitions?
- Reimbursements from:
 - petty cash?
 - insurance?
 - expense reports submitted?
- Ordered items?
- Items being repaired?
- Tickets?
- Decisions by others?



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Prompt Questions for your Professional To-Do's

Professional Prompt Questions - Part 3 of 3

Do you need to engage in any professional development, such as:

- workshops/seminars/other training?
- necessary things to learn?
- research any needed information?
- skills to practice and learn (e.g. computer skills)?
- video/audio/webinar training?
- any issues with your résumé?
- formal education?

Do you need to address any issues with your professional wardrobe, such as:

- items to purchase?
- items to alter?
- items to have washed/cleaned/pressed?

You Don't Have to Do This All At Once

Remember, don't feel overwhelmed by this exercise. If you need to split this up into multiple ten-minute sessions, the end result will be just as effective.

Take as much time as you need.

Once you have these items down, you should find that you are less plagued by items that your brain is constantly trying to remind you of.

Next Step: Personal Prompt Questions



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Brain Dump Checklist

Prompt Questions for your Personal To-Do's

Personal Prompt Questions - Part 1 of 3

What personal projects have you begun, but not completed?

What projects do you need to begin?

What commitments or promises have you made to others?

- spouse
- children
- other family members
- friends
- professionals such as accountant, attorney, etc

What borrowed items need to be returned?

What projects need to be completed for organizations in which you are involved?

- service
- civic
- volunteer
- groups related to your children (P.T.O., scouts, etc.)

With whom do you need to initiate or receive communications?

- family
- friends
- professionals
- organizations

Which communications do you need to initiate or respond to?

- phone calls
- email
- letters
- cards
- invitations

Which special occasion events do you need to plan or attend?

- birthdays
- anniversaries
- weddings
- graduations
- holidays
- recitals
- plays
- other family functions

Which travel events do you need to plan?

- weekend trips
- vacations
- luggage needs
- packing list

Are there any social or cultural events you'd like to attend?

Which sporting events are you planning to attend?

- professional
- children- or family-related

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Brain Dump Checklist

Prompt Questions for your Personal To-Do's

Personal Prompt Questions - Part 2 of 3

Administration: What tasks must you do for the household?

- pay bills
- banking
- investments
- loans
- taxes
- insurance
- legal matters

Is there anything you're waiting for?

- mail or Internet orders
- repairs
- reimbursements
- loaned items
- medical referrals/information/appointments
- RSVPs

Who do you need to contact for home/household issues?

- landlord
- repair people

Which tasks must be completed for managing your properties?

- legal/real estate/zoning issues
- taxes
- issues regarding builders/contractors/suppliers
- heating/air conditioning
- plumbing

- electrical/wiring/light bulbs
- roofing
- landscaping
- driveway maintenance/repair
- issues with walls/ceilings/floors
- decorative accessories
- furniture
- utilities
- appliances
- kitchen needs
- washers/dryers/vacuums

What computer problems/issues/needs do you have?

- hardware
- software

What needs do you have regarding television/cable/stereo components?

Do you have any needs regarding cameras and accessories (lenses, printing, etc.)?

Are there problems with phones and/or answering systems?

What are your needs regarding sports equipment?

Do you need to organize/utilize closet space?
What equipment do you need?



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Prompt Questions for your Personal To-Do's

Personal Prompt Questions - Part 3 of 3

What clothing needs do you and your family have?

- new clothes for special occasions
- sports-related clothing
- clothing repairs, alterations or cleaning

What needs do you have related to storage areas?

- garage
- attic
- basement

Do you have a vehicle needing repair or maintenance?

- oil change
- tune up
- brake job
- tires

Which tools are needed for impending projects?

What needs and appointments do you have concerning pet care?

What healthcare needs and appointments do you have for yourself or others?

- medical
- dental
- preventative

What requirements/supplies do you need to pursue your hobbies?

Which books/CDs/DVDs do you want or need?

Do you have any errands to do?

- hardware store
- drug store
- market
- bank
- dry cleaners
- stationers
- mall
- warehouse club
- other specialty stores
- carpooling

Which personal care appointments do you have, or need to schedule?

- haircut
- manicure
- tailor
- other

What educational/training needs or desires do you have?

- computer-related
- job-related
- hobby-related
- enjoyment

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Brain Dump Checklist

Processing Your Brain Dump

Processing Your Brain Dump

Wow, that was quite a feat! Take a second to pat yourself on the back.

Now that you have your list (even if it's incomplete), you are ready to start organizing your list so you have a better idea of priorities and items you can get off your list quickly.

For additional information on task management categories, please reference Chapter 3 in the book *From To-Do to Done*.

Here are some helpful questions and considerations that pertain to processing your answers:

1. Does it require action, or is it reference information? (Reference goes in your notes.)
2. If it requires action, can someone else do it for you? (Consider this carefully!)
3. If so, delegate (I like to call it "empowering yourself and others), and put it on your Waiting For list. If not, continue down this list.
4. Is it a "talk to?" (The next time I see xxx I want to remember to tell him xxx.)
5. Is it current (you plan to do it within a month or so)? Or Future?
6. If Future - have you decided to definitely do it? Or is it Someday/Maybe?
7. If current - is it a Project? (Multiple steps and time periods, definable beginning & end?)
8. If it's a Project, put it on your list with the category of "Projects," but then ask yourself, "What's the VERY NEXT thing that has to happen to move the Project forward?" Is this a Next Action (weak relationship to time?) Or does it have a strong relationship to time (happening on a certain day, or on a certain day and at a certain time - calendar appointment?) Or is it something that you're waiting for to move forward?
9. If it's not a Project, that leaves a Next Action or a Waiting For. If it's a Next Action, is it something you will do from work? Or is it something you can only physically do from some other location?
10. Regardless of whether you put it on Next Actions, Waiting For, or an @location list, remember to be VERY specific about the action. Some examples:
 - call
 - email
 - hear back from

Congratulations, and here's to your productivity!



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