

Time Management & Productivity — Workbook

This workbook turns the course into the real decisions and habits that put you in control of your time. Each section maps to a course module: building the foundations of capture and clarify, prioritising with the Eisenhower Matrix and the 1-3-5 rule, executing with time-blocking and focus, and measuring, automating, and sustaining your system with a weekly review. Do the work as you go, actually empty your head, sort your real tasks, block your real calendar, and track a real week, because time management is a practice, not a reading. The included spreadsheet, document, and CSV templates are built to be reused every day and week so you never have to rebuild your system from memory.

Why You Feel Busy but Behind, and the Foundations of a System

Empty your head into one trusted inbox and turn the raw list into specific next actions you can actually start.

Exercise: The Full Brain Dump

Set a 20 to 30 minute timer and write down every task, errand, idea, and nagging worry on your mind, work and personal, without organising. The goal is a completely empty head. Then answer the prompts.

- How many items did you capture, and how did your mind feel before versus after?

- Which nagging items had been rattling around for weeks without being written down?

- Where will your single capture inbox live (Todoist, TickTick, notes app, notebook), and is it now on your phone?

- What is your rule for capturing a new commitment the instant it appears?

Exercise: Clarify Into Next Actions

Go through your brain dump item by item and turn each one into a concrete, verb-first next action. Apply the two-minute rule as you go. Then answer the prompts.

- Rewrite three vague items (like "taxes" or "website") as specific next actions starting with a verb.

- How many sub-two-minute tasks did you complete immediately during this pass?

- Which items are actually projects (more than one step), and what is the single next action for each?

- What did you move to a Someday/Maybe list to get it off your active list?

Worksheet: System Foundations Plan

Decide how your capture-and-clarify system will work before you build the rest. Fill in each field with your real plan.

My single capture inbox (the one tool everything goes into)

My rule for what counts as a 'next action' (verb-first, concrete, startable)

Where I keep my Projects list (outcomes needing more than one step)

Where I keep my Waiting-For list (things blocked on other people)

Where I keep my Someday/Maybe list (things I might do later)

When I will process my inbox to empty (daily trigger)

Checklist: Foundations Ready Checklist

- I have one single capture inbox installed on my phone and computer.
- I did a complete brain dump and emptied my head onto the list.
- Every active item is rewritten as a verb-first next action.
- Anything under two minutes was done immediately, not tracked.
- Multi-step items are flagged as projects with a clear next action.
- I have separate Waiting-For and Someday/Maybe lists.

Prioritisation: Deciding What Actually Matters

Sort your tasks by importance not urgency, find your high-leverage few, and plan a realistic focused day.

Worksheet: Eisenhower Matrix Sort

Take today's or this week's tasks and place each into one of the four quadrants. Be honest about importance versus mere urgency. Fill in each quadrant with your real tasks.

Q1 Urgent and Important (do now): list your real crises and true deadlines

Q2 Not Urgent but Important (schedule): list planning, deep work, health, learning, relationships

Q3 Urgent but Not Important (delegate or minimise): list interruptions and low-value requests

Q4 Not Urgent and Not Important (eliminate): list your real time-wasters

The one Q2 task I will protect a block for today

What I will delegate, decline, or delete from Q3 and Q4 this week

Exercise: Find Your 20 Percent

Apply the Pareto principle to your task list to surface the vital few tasks that drive most of your results. Answer each prompt honestly.

- Which one task, if it were the only thing you did today, would make the day worthwhile?
 - Which task, if completed, would make several other tasks easier or unnecessary?
 - Which recurring activities feel busy but produce little real result (your low-value 80 percent)?
 - What is one high-leverage task you keep postponing because it is not urgent?
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Worksheet: Daily 1-3-5 Plan

Plan a realistic day using the 1-3-5 rule: one big task, three medium, five small. Your big task is your frog, do it first. Fill in each field for tomorrow.

1 BIG task (my frog, highest-leverage, done first thing)

3 MEDIUM tasks (meaningful but smaller)

5 SMALL tasks (quick wins and admin)

The time block when I will eat the frog

What I am deliberately leaving on the backlog (not doing today)

Checklist: Prioritisation Checklist

- I sorted my tasks by importance, not just urgency, using the Eisenhower Matrix.
- I scheduled at least one Quadrant 2 (important, not urgent) task.
- I identified my high-leverage 20 percent of tasks.
- I planned my day with the 1-3-5 rule instead of an overstuffed list.
- I chose one big task as my frog and will do it first.
- I said no, delegated, or deleted at least one low-value commitment.

Focus and Execution: Doing the Work Without Distraction

Give every task a home on the calendar, protect deep work with focus techniques, and engineer out distraction.

Exercise: Time-Block Tomorrow

Open your calendar and build a time-blocked plan for tomorrow. Block fixed commitments first, then your big task, then batches and buffers. Answer the prompts after.

- Where did you place your big 1-3-5 task, and is it in your highest-energy window?

- Which similar small tasks did you batch into a single block (e.g. an email/admin block)?

- How much white space (unscheduled buffer) did you leave, and is it at least 20 percent?

- What is your plan when a block overruns, do you re-block rather than abandon the system?

Exercise: Run a Pomodoro Deep-Work Session

Pick your most important task and run at least two Pomodoro sprints (25 minutes on, 5 off). Clear distractions first. Then reflect using the prompts.

- What single task did you choose, and did the 25-minute commitment make it easier to start?

- What distractions popped up, and did jotting them on a notepad help you stay on task?

- How many pomodoros did the task take, and what does that tell you for future estimates?

- How did the focused sprint compare to your usual scattered way of working?

Worksheet: Distraction-Proofing Plan

Engineer your environment so focus is the default. Decide your concrete setup for deep-work hours and fill in each field.

Notifications I am turning off (keep only calls and calendar?)

Where my phone lives during deep work (ideally another room)

The blocker I will use (Freedom, Cold Turkey, StayFocusd) and when it runs

My do-not-disturb signal others recognise (closed door, headphones)

My current daily phone screen time, and my reduction target

The focus hours I will communicate to colleagues or family

Checklist: Focus and Execution Checklist

- Every important task for tomorrow has a specific time block on my calendar.
- My big task sits in a protected deep-work block at my peak energy.
- I left at least 20 percent white space as buffer.
- I ran at least one Pomodoro deep-work session today.
- Non-essential notifications are turned off.
- My phone is out of the room and a blocker is scheduled over deep work.

Measure, Sustain, and Build a System That Lasts

Track where your time really goes, cut the biggest leaks, automate the repetitive, and install a weekly review you can sustain.

Exercise: Run a One-Week Time Audit

Choose a tracking method (Toggl Track, RescueTime, or a paper log) and record what you actually do for one ordinary week. At week's end, total by category and answer the prompts.

- How many hours went to deep work versus email, meetings, and distraction?

- Where was the biggest gap between what you assumed and what the data showed?

- What are your two or three biggest time leaks?

- For each leak, what specific countermeasure will you apply (cut, cap, batch, delegate, block)?

Worksheet: Meetings, Email, and Automation Plan

Reclaim hours from the biggest time-sinks and decide what to automate. Fill in each field with a concrete commitment.

One recurring meeting I will cancel, shorten, or turn into an email

My email windows (the 2-3 times a day I will process it)

Three saved replies or templates I will create for repeated messages

Two text-expander snippets I will set up (e.g. signature, address)

One Zapier or Make automation I will build, and the chore it removes

My default meeting length going forward (e.g. 25 minutes)

Worksheet: Weekly Review and Sustainability Plan

Design the review loop and energy habits that keep your whole system alive without burnout. This is the most important page in the workbook, fill it in concretely.

Day and time of my 15-30 minute weekly review (protected like an appointment)

My weekly review steps (clear inboxes, review lists, check calendar, review goals, plan the week)

My personal peak-energy hours for deep work, and my low hours for admin

My end-of-day shutdown ritual (what closes the workday)

My non-negotiable recovery habits (sleep target, daily walk, real time off)

The burnout warning signs I will watch for (exhaustion, cynicism, dread)

Checklist: Lasting System Checklist

- I tracked one full, honest week of where my time went.
- I identified my biggest leaks and set a countermeasure for each.
- I batched email into set windows and cut or shortened at least one meeting.
- I built at least one automation and a few saved replies or snippets.
- I have a scheduled, protected weekly review with a repeatable checklist.
- I plan my big rocks first and protect sleep, breaks, and a shutdown ritual.

Your Action Plan

1. Choose one capture inbox, install it everywhere, and do a complete brain dump to empty your head.
2. Clarify every item into a verb-first next action, doing anything under two minutes immediately.
3. Separate projects from single actions and park low-priority items on a Someday/Maybe list.
4. Sort your tasks with the Eisenhower Matrix and protect a block for an important Quadrant 2 task.
5. Plan each day with the 1-3-5 rule and eat your frog (biggest task) first thing in the morning.
6. Time-block tomorrow's calendar, placing your deep-work block at your peak energy with 20 percent buffer.
7. Run Pomodoro sprints (25 on, 5 off) and turn off notifications, putting your phone in another room.
8. Track one honest week with Toggl Track or RescueTime, then cut your two or three biggest leaks.
9. Batch email into set windows, shorten or cancel a meeting, and automate one repetitive task.
10. Install a protected 15-30 minute weekly review and respect sleep, breaks, and a daily

shutdown ritual.

