

Do Strategies

Strategies for turning action items into clear tasks, linked projects, and visible progress.

Download gets it out of your head. Decide tells you what it means. Do turns it into visible progress.

The goal is not a bigger task list. The goal is clear next steps and a clear home for every actionable item.

When you have downloaded everything from your head and decided what each item means, the next step is to turn the actionable items into work you can actually do.

Download

Gets it out of your head.

Decide

Tells you what it means.

Do

Turns it into progress.

The Core Principle

Do not leave action items as vague intentions.

Every actionable item should have a clear next step and a clear home: a quick action, task, linked project, habit, calendar block, or waiting-for item.

Turn Action Items Into Clear Tasks

1. Start With The Action Item

Before you create a task, read the action item carefully.

- What is this asking me to do?
- Is this one step or multiple steps?
- What would done look like?
- Who owns the next move?
- Where should this live?

Do not add it to your task list until you know what kind of action it is.

2. Rewrite It As A Clear Task

A task should be something you can do. A good task usually starts with a verb.

Format: Verb + outcome + useful detail.

- Email Sarah the updated invoice.
- Book dentist appointment for next week.
- Draft three bullet points for the proposal.
- Ask Peter for the updated quote.

If you cannot write it as one clear sentence, it is not ready to be done.

3. Find The Next Visible Action

A next action should be visible, physical, and specific enough that you can start without rethinking the whole issue.

Not: Sort out finances. **Better:** Email accountant for tax checklist.

Not: Fix website. **Better:** Open homepage and list five changes.

What is the very next thing I need to do to get this done?

4. Use The Two-Minute Rule

If the action will take less than two minutes, do it immediately while you are processing.

- Send a quick confirmation
- File a receipt
- Add a date to the calendar
- Send the document
- Save the note in the right place

If tracking it will take longer than doing it, do it now.

5. Decide If It Is A Task Or A Project

A task takes one action. A project takes more than one action. A habit needs repeated behaviour.

- "Call dentist" is a task.
- "Prepare tax return" is a project.
- "Launch webinar" is a project.
- "Walk three times per week" is a habit.

Do not put multi-step projects on a single task list as if they are tasks.

6. Use The Task/Project Decoder

1. Is this still in my head?
2. Does it begin with a verb?
3. Have I done this before?
4. Can I complete it in one sitting?
5. Does it contain the word "and"?
6. Could I delegate any part of it?
7. Does it feel vague or unclear?

If there are hidden steps, treat it as a project until the next action is clear.

Create And Link Projects

7. Create A Project When There Is More Than One Step

A good project needs a clear outcome, useful dates, a linked next task, supporting tasks, and a review rhythm.

Project Name: Outcome stated clearly

Done Looks Like: What will be true?

Next Action: The next visible step

Linked Tasks: The actions needed

Review: When will I check progress?

Every project should have at least one next task linked to it.

Project Example: Launch Webinar

Project: Launch Overwhelm Recovery Webinar

Done Looks Like: Webinar delivered and follow-up sent.

Next Action: Draft webinar outline.

Linked Tasks: Create landing page, write emails, prepare slides, test signup form, send follow-up.

8. Link Tasks To Projects

A task linked to a project gives the task meaning and gives the project movement.

- Does this task belong to an existing project?
- Is this the next action for a project?
- Will completing it move a project forward?
- What is the next task after it?

Linked tasks keep projects from becoming forgotten outcomes.

9. Make Sure Every Active Project Has A Next Action

A project without a next action is stalled.

- What is the very next action?
- Is that action already on my task list?
- Is it clear enough to do?
- Is it linked to the project?
- Does it need a date, context, or calendar block?

A project is only alive when it has a next action.

10. Add The Right Task Details

Add only the details that help you do the task: project, due date, context, time estimate, energy level, priority, owner, waiting-for person, notes, or links.

Due date: Use only when there is a real deadline. **Context:** Email, phone, computer, errands, home, office, meeting, waiting for, deep work, admin. **Time:** 2, 15, 30, 60, or 90 minutes. **Energy:** High, medium, or low.

A well-formed task should tell you what to do, where it belongs, and when it can realistically be done.

Choose What To Do Next

11. Do, Delegate, Defer, Delete

Do it if it is quick, important, or already in front of you.

Delegate it if someone else owns it or can do it better. Create a waiting-for item if needed.

Defer it if it matters but should happen later.

Delete it if it does not matter.

Every action item should be done, delegated, deferred, or deleted - not left undecided.

12. Filter By Priority, Context, And Energy

When your task list is ready, use three filters:

1. **Priority:** What matters most?
2. **Context:** What can I do where I am?
3. **Energy:** What do I have the energy for now?
 - What are the top three outcomes?
 - What can I do with this tool?
 - What matches my current energy?
 - What moves an important project forward?

Do not stare at the whole list. Filter the list.

13. Create A Short Next Actions List

Create a short list called **Next Actions Today**. Keep only three items on it.

- If only three things got done today, which three would matter most?
- Which three tasks move active projects forward?
- Which three tasks reduce the most pressure?
- Which three align with today's priorities?

A short list helps you act instead of re-deciding all day.

14. Move Projects Forward One Step At A Time

You complete projects by doing linked tasks.

- What is the next step?
- What is the next task after that?
- What could move this forward today?
- What is blocking progress?
- Who needs to act next?
- What would close the loop?

Finish the current next action, then define the next next action.

15. Plan Projects Before You Execute

Use planning when the project has many moving parts, people, deadlines, dependencies, or feels unclear.

1. Define the outcome.
2. Brainstorm the steps.
3. Put steps in rough order.
4. Identify dependencies.
5. Assign owners if needed.
6. Add the first next action.
7. Schedule review or work blocks.

16. Protect Time For Important Tasks

Put a task on the calendar when it needs deep focus, takes more than 30 minutes, must happen at a specific time, supports an important goal, keeps slipping, or needs high energy.

Examples: Write proposal - Tuesday 09:00-10:30. Prepare webinar - Thursday 08:30-10:00.

If it matters and keeps slipping, schedule it.

Review, Translate Goals, And Close Loops

17. Review Tasks And Projects Regularly

Daily review: Tick off completed tasks, capture loose ends, identify gaps, choose tomorrow's top tasks, and add next actions to active projects.

Weekly review: Review all projects, confirm next actions, clean up old tasks, decide what to delete, defer, or delegate, reconnect tasks to goals and roles, and choose key projects for the week.

If you are not reviewing, projects will quietly stall.

18. Use The Ward Round Method

Think of your project list like a ward round. Do not only visit the loudest patient. Systematically check each project and decide the next treatment step.

1. Go through every active project.
2. Check the current status.
3. Identify whether it is on track, stuck, waiting, or complete.
4. Decide the next action.
5. Add or update the linked task.

Review projects systematically, not only the ones shouting for attention.

19. Turn Goals Into Projects, Tasks, And Habits

Goals become real through repeatable actions, completed projects, and clear tasks.

Goal: Launch a YouTube channel

Projects: Setup recording station, create account, create branding, develop posting schedule.

Tasks: Buy ring light, learn uploads, draft description, record first video.

Habits: Record weekly, review analytics monthly.

20. Close The Loop

The real purpose of tasks and projects is to close loops.

- Is the next action clear?
- Is it on the right list?
- Is it linked to the right project?
- Does it need a date or calendar block?
- Who owns it?
- What would make this complete?
- What is the next decision?

A good action system helps you stop rethinking and start completing.

The Task And Project Creation Checklist

Use this when processing downloaded and decided action items.

1. What is the action item?
2. Can I rewrite it as a clear task?
3. Does it begin with a verb?
4. What is the next visible action?
5. Can I do it in two minutes?
6. Is this a one-step task or a multi-step project?
7. If it is a project, what does done look like?
8. Does this task belong to an existing project?
9. If yes, is it linked to that project?
10. If no, do I need to create a new project?
11. Does the project have at least one next action?
12. Who owns the next move?
13. Does it need a due date?
14. What context does it belong in?
15. How much time does it need?
16. What energy does it require?
17. Should I do, delegate, defer, or delete it?
18. Does it need a calendar block?
19. Is it one of today's top three next actions?
20. What would close the loop?

A Simple Processing Flow

PROCESS ONE ITEM AT A TIME

1. **Clarify it:** What is the action item really asking?
2. **Verbify it:** Rewrite it as a clear task.
3. **Decode it:** Is it a task, project, habit, or waiting-for item?
4. **Link it:** Connect it to the right project, or create one.
5. **Define it:** Add the next visible action.
6. **Detail it:** Add only useful details.
7. **Schedule it:** Put it on the calendar if needed.
8. **Do it:** Complete the next action.
9. **Review it:** Decide the next next action.
10. **Close it:** Mark the loop complete.

Examples

Action Item: “Website”

Bad task: Website

- **Project:** Update website homepage
- **Done Looks Like:** Homepage updated with current offer and call to action
- **Next Task:** Open homepage and list five changes
- **Context:** Computer
- **Energy:** Medium
- **Time:** 30 minutes

Action Item: “Dentist”

Bad task: Dentist

- **Task:** Call dentist to book appointment
- **Context:** Phone
- **Time:** 2 minutes
- **Decision:** Do now

Action Item: “Launch Webinar”

Bad task: Launch webinar

- **Project:** Launch Overwhelm Recovery Webinar
- **Done Looks Like:** Webinar delivered and follow-up sent
- **Next Task:** Draft webinar outline
- **Linked Tasks:** Create landing page, prepare slides, test signup form, send reminder email, send follow-up email
- **Calendar Block:** Prepare webinar - Thursday 08:30-10:00

Action Item: “Get Fit”

- **Goal:** Walk 5km without stopping
- **Habit:** Walk 30 minutes three times per week
- **Next Task:** Schedule first two walks
- **Calendar:** Mon/Wed/Fri 06:30-07:00
- **Home:** Habit tracker

Action Item: “Ask Peter About Quote”

- **Task:** Message Peter for updated quote
- **Context:** Message/Phone
- **Time:** 2 minutes
- **Decision:** Do now or add to today's message burst
- **Waiting For:** Peter to send updated quote

More Examples

Action Item: “Prepare Tax Return”

- **Project:** Prepare tax return
- **Done Looks Like:** Tax return submitted
- **Next Task:** Email accountant for tax checklist
- **Linked Tasks:** Collect receipts, export bank statements, review income, send documents
- **Due Date:** Real submission deadline only

Final Thought

You do not get things done by keeping action items on a list.

You get things done by turning action items into clear tasks, linking tasks to projects, and doing the next visible action until the loop is closed.

A downloaded item becomes useful when it is decided. A decided item becomes powerful when it is converted into a task. A task becomes meaningful when it moves a project or responsibility forward.

A project gets done when the next action is clear, linked, reviewed, and completed.

DOWNLOAD → DECIDE → DO

Download clears your mind. Decide clarifies the work. Do completes the next action.

My Tasks		
@Calls	@Office	@Home
@Computer	@Calendar	@Errands
@Someday/Maybe	@Meetings	@Waiting For
@Read	@Weekly	@Monthly

Task List

[illegible]

My Projects

Project:

Outcome:

Task 1:

Task 2:

Task 3:

Task 4:

Project:

Outcome:

Task 1:

Task 2:

Task 3:

Task 4:

Project:

Outcome:

Task 1:

Task 2:

Task 3:

Task 4:

Project:

Outcome:

Task 1:

Task 2:

Task 3:

Task 4:

Project:

Outcome:

Task 1:

Task 2:

Task 3:

Task 4:

Project:

Outcome:

Task 1:

Task 2:

Task 3:

Task 4: