PLANNER · PRACTICAL RESOURCE

Sustainable Workflow Planner

This planner helps you build a simple, flexible productivity system that takes 30 seconds to maintain and survives real life.

01 Building a Workflow That Lasts

Most productivity systems collapse within a fortnight because they demand too much overhead or don't fit how you actually work. The ones that stick are boring, flexible, and take about thirty seconds to maintain. Use this planner to design a workflow based on what you already do, not what you think you should do.

i If you're not slightly disappointed by how simple your workflow is, you've probably overcomplicated it.

What Already Works

Before building anything new, identify what you're already doing that works. These existing habits cost nothing to maintain because they're already part of your routine.

- [ ] I naturally check email or messages at a specific time each day
- [ ] I have a consistent place where I dump files or notes that need attention
- [ ] I already jot down ideas or tasks somewhere (notebook, phone, scraps of paper)
- [ ] I tend to remember important things without writing them down
- [ ] I work better with visual boards rather than lists (or vice versa)

What I already do that works (even imperfectly)

Your Core System

Design the simplest possible workflow that serves your actual needs. Remember: it should take roughly 30 seconds per day to maintain.

My single capture point (where everything gets written down first)

My 30-second daily check-in (what I'll do each morning)

When I'll process my capture point (once daily, when it feels full, etc.)

> **i** Everything goes to your capture point first. You're not organising yet, just collecting. Process it later when you have a few minutes.

Essential vs Optional

A system that survives chaos has a tiny essential core and optional extras. If you stop using it for a week, you should be able to restart without guilt or catch-up work.

Essential (system breaks without this)	Optional (nice to have when calm)
e.g. Single list of current projects	e.g. Detailed notes on each project

Two-Week Test Run

Test your workflow under actual working conditions—not during a quiet, perfectly organised week. After two weeks of normal chaos, evaluate honestly.

Does daily maintenance take 30 seconds or less?

Does it feel natural, or am I forcing myself to use it?

Did it survive interruptions, busy days, or forgetting about it?

Is maintaining it worthwhile, or does it feel like homework?

Simple Adjustments Only

If your workflow is functioning reliably after two weeks, stop optimising. Make only the adjustments below, then leave it alone.

What can I remove to make maintenance even faster?

What single obstacle prevented me from using it consistently?

The smallest possible fix for that obstacle

> Resist the urge to keep optimising. Additional features usually add complexity and new points of failure. If it works, you're done.

Principles to Remember

- [ ] Boring and reliable beats exciting and abandoned
- [ ] The best system is the one you forget you're using
- [ ] Thirty seconds of daily maintenance, maximum
- [ ] One capture point for everything
- [ ] Build on existing habits, don't replace them
- [ ] Make the essential core tiny so it survives disruption
- [ ] Stop optimising once it works reliably

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