

Welcome to Think Productive's

## How To Keep Your New Year's Resolutions Like A Productivity Ninja!



Everything you need to get your new year's resolutions right,  
and make next year one of your most productive and successful yet!



# We are Think Productive

Think Productive provides fun workshops with practical at-desk coaching to help employees increase productivity, beat stress, feel more in control of their work and develop playful, productive momentum.

How to use our CORD workflow model to make next year a great year for you!

Why do most of our resolutions get forgotten rather than completed? It's often to do with not having the right workflow habits in place. We need good workflow habits at four key stages, outlined by our CORD workflow model (Capture and Collect, Organise, Review, Do). To make good habits stick we first need to be aware of what we're doing well, what we're not doing so well and even what we're not doing at all. The following pages offer some specific exercises you can do for the first 3 stages of CORD to help make your new years' resolutions stick, as well as some useful resources to support you in that all-important 'Do' phase. Good luck!

# CORD

1. **Capture and collect** – on the next page, spend some time capturing and collecting all your thoughts and plans for next year.

2. **Organise** – we'll ask you to convert the resolutions into tangible projects, stimulate your thinking about what success will look like in each case and start to think about the first steps too.

3. **Review Regularly** – it's important you review your resolutions throughout the year. Here, we ask you to put some times in the diary to do this and make sure your resolutions are 'mainstreamed' to be part of your more regular system for managing projects and actions

4. **Do** – well, that bit's really down to you. However, we've enclosed a few ideas of things that might help you along the way.

“Thinking is the hardest work there is, which is the probable reason so few engage in it”  
– Henry Ford



# Capture and collect



## Instructions:

Disconnect from everything so you're not distracted: if possible, print this out, grab a pen and go find a coffee shop or somewhere cosy and quiet to sit. There are no rules at this stage. Just capture and collect any thoughts you have about next year – your ambitions, plans, nags and goals for the year ahead. You may choose to mindmap, group them together by themes (home, work, diet, etc) or just scrawl it freeform with pictures and doodles galore. The choice is yours – be ambitious, get creative and allow yourself the freedom to 'unhook' and think about what you really want in the coming year.

## My perfect year

### Helpful hints...

Think about: Social, Personal, Food/diet, Financial, Professional, Creative, Home, Health/body/fitness, Spiritual, My impact on the world / living sustainably, Family

# Organise



We're  
on a  
mission!

## Instructions:

Go through what you wrote on the previous page. Convert each of your resolutions to a PROJECT.

Give the project a name and then fill in the other boxes for each one.

Once you have a project and thought about the end goal, think about what you need to do to kick things off or get the project moving: is it that you need to find out more information (if so, what is it you need to know?), is it you need to buy some tools, is there a first step you haven't taken yet? Once you know what this, write this down as your NEXT ACTION. You might even find that you have more than one next action, in which case, write as many down as you can.

**Project name:**

**Next Action(s):**

**Project name:**

**Next Actions(s):**

(do this for each of the resolutions you wrote down on the previous page)

## Helpful Hints...

Language matters. The words you use to describe your new years' resolution will go a long way to either making it happen or you going numb to the thoughts and abandoning or forgetting it by January 27<sup>th</sup>. To give yourself the best possible chance of success, try to describe projects using words that tell you what the end result looks like. For example, don't say 'lose weight', do say 'lose half a stone by May and go running three times a week'. The same is true of work projects, so 'conference' becomes 'conference attended by 280 delegates & 80% rated it very good or above'.

# Review



Reviewing your resolutions or projects regularly is one of the most important productivity habits you can develop. It's a process that takes about an hour or an hour and a half depending on how busy your week has been. It's a systematic process run by a checklist – that you can tailor individually to your own role and style – that ensures that you follow through on your promises, chase up the people who aren't doing the same and do the most important, focussed and profound thinking about your projects and what's needed from you in the coming week. It's a process that leaves you feeling calm and in control, knowing exactly where you're up to. It gives you enough of the bigger picture so that you don't drown in the day to day but ensures that if the proverbial hits the fan by Tuesday, you're prepared and ready to respond. Some people tell me they don't have time, but in truth, the weekly review SAVES you time: it saves you having to do 'project-level thinking' all the time without ever feeling you've cracked it, it saves you time as you think of cleverer or quicker ways of doing things and of course it also allows you to renegotiate with yourself about what you promised you would do – using some smart overview analysis to eliminate the pointless and remain only with the impactful. And if you still think you don't have time, well, did you attend a meeting last week that didn't lead to anything? How much time did you spend on Facebook or other sites that you could have avoided, or struggling to get clarity about what to do next? It's never about time, it's about habits and where you choose to put your attention.

## Contact the Think Productive Team

To sign up for our monthly productivity tips email or to discuss our workshops...

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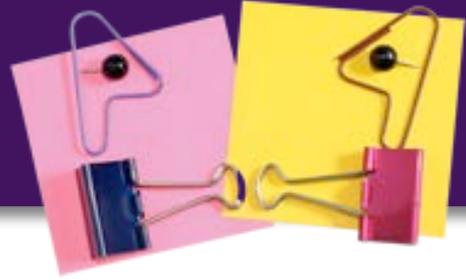
Think about what you need to do, every week, to have a successful weekly review...

Stage	Examples include...	Write your own weekly review checklist here
<b>Get back to zero</b>	<p>Get your email inbox to zero (if you think that's crazy, it's not. Check out the back page).</p> <p>Deal with paperwork and filing, get it all done.</p> <p>Transfer actions from my notepad into my system or to-do list</p>	
<b>Get current</b>	<p>read through lists and cross off stuff already done</p> <p>add in new actions and clear your head</p>	
<b>Get ahead</b>	<p>Think through each project on your project list or team project plan and think about the actions needed in the coming week – add these to your to-do list</p>	
<b>Get ready</b>	<p>Print off the tickets or info you need.</p> <p>Does your team know when they can contact you this week? Send them an email about this.</p>	

### Helpful hints...

“We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence is not an act, but a habit” - Aristotle

# Do



## Instructions:

Do it.

That's all we can say because really it's up to you. Keep your resolutions, be focussed and brave, grab opportunities with both hands, put in the work, succeed.

Here are a few ideas and resources that might well give you a little helping hand. They are NOT substitutes for the instructions above but might just help!

## Get some good systems in place:

### David Allen – Getting Things Done

At Think Productive we're big fans of 'GTD' and we thoroughly recommend people get the book! We can also help with the implementation of GTD systems, through our 'How to Get Things Done' workshops.

### Sally McGhee – Take Back Your Life

Great for anyone wanting to use Outlook as their main organising tool. I'm a big fan of Outlook's ability to keep emails, calendar, project lists and contacts all in one place. It might not be the sexiest option out there, but this book will make it a whole lot more productive!

### Merlin Mann – Inbox Zero

Merlin's seminal 'Inbox Zero' talk at Google has been an inspiration to Think Productive and has racked up thousands of Youtube views. Here, you can watch the talk, but it's only useful if you do something about it! As a standard rule, the Think Productive get their email to zero before leaving the office each day and it's a habit that's actually pretty easy to maintain. Ask us how:

<http://thinkproductive.co.uk/b4/2010/07/13/inbox-zero-training-%E2%80%93-can-it-really-work/>

## Getting ultra-organised:

### Remember the Milk

For those of you wanting web-based and smart-phone apps, Remember the Milk is probably the best out there – as used by our Productivity Ninja, Lee Cottier, who organises his whole life by it!

<http://www.rememberthemilk.com/>

### Toodledo

Another similar list-manager to Remember the Milk and actually used by a lot of the Think Productive gang internally to manage all our projects and actions. What we love about Toodledo is how simple it is to use – it's not the prettiest list-manager around, but has a simple website interface and perfect synching to its smartphone apps too.

<http://www.toodledo.com/>

### The Hipster PDA

If all those techy iphone apps and software plug-ins leave you a bit cold, try the hipster PDA – Merlin Mann's joyously lo-fi way to keep on top of everything you need to do.

<http://www.43folders.com/2004/09/03/introducing-the-hipster-pda>

### Evernote

We love Evernote and we're not alone! It's like a digital filing cabinet to keep all those useful snippets of reference information, website links and pretty much everything else you need at your fingertips.

You can access it through your phone, through your computer or through the Evernote website. It's ace!

<http://evernote.com/>

## Making it stick:

### Habit Forge

If a lot of your resolutions involve changing your habits, then try Habit Forge – a helpful, free website that will email you reminders, asking you if you are keeping to your habits. It becomes a game, as you work to rack up higher totals of the consecutive days you've kept your promises! Playful & Productive!

<http://habitforge.com/>

### 43 Things

Go public and tell the world about your resolutions. Suddenly, there's a million people you don't want to let down (quite why we prefer not to let others down than let ourselves down is another story entirely, but try this anyway! <http://www.43things.com/>

## Pomodoro technique

Distracted by Facebook and Twitter? Me too. A great way to develop strong 'Do' habits and steely concentration is the Pomodoro technique. Named after a kitchen timer, it works by focussing your mind on mini-deadlines and concentration sprints of 25 minutes – keeping your mind fresh all day and keeping you focussed on that countdown! Fun and very effective.

<http://thinkproductive.co.uk/b4/2010/09/27/the-pomodoro-technique/>

## The War of Art – Stephen Pressfield

There are some great books about overcoming procrastination. This is my favourite.

# Ninja-level Productivity...



## Think Productive's How to Get Things Done workshop

Spend a day with us and we'll get you in control. Workshops available all year round in London, Manchester, Birmingham, Bristol, and Dublin.

## Get your own Productivity Ninja!

Book one of our Productivity Ninjas to come to YOUR office and transform the productivity skills of your team! Workshops with at-desk coaching to implement what we teach you straight away! Drop us an email to [hello@thinkproductive.co.uk](mailto:hello@thinkproductive.co.uk) to find out more!



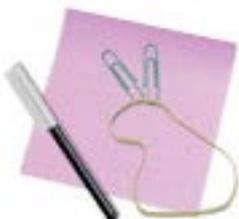
Getting Your Inbox to Zero



Email Etiquette



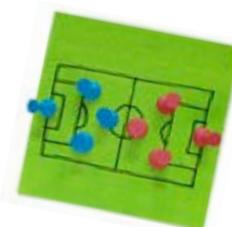
How to Get Things Done



Making Meetings Magic



How to be a Productivity Ninja



Smells Like Team Spirit