Productivity Toolbox

Tips & Tricks for Getting Things Done!
Introductions

Name
Library
#1 Productivity challenge
or - Why did you sign up for this session?
The agenda

- Productivity barriers and solutions
- Time Management
- Break
- Email!
  - Some time for actual email processing
- Break
- Calendars
- To-Do Lists
- Fun tools
- Discussion/Questions
Know thyself

Everyone has different work styles, habits, and tendencies

From http://www.flickr.com/photos/totalaldo/2400635097/
Sound familiar?

- Being overwhelmed by too much to do.
- Too many distractions
- Procrastinating – dreading a task.
- Not wanting to do a task because it’s boring or hard.
- Being intimidated by a large project.
- Tools are distracting or tough to use.
- Fiddling with tools instead of doing.
- Other people, making requests, calling, IMing, emailing.
- Meetings.

Break it down!

What's stopping you from getting it done?
What are your weaknesses?
What can you do about it?

Take a minute - write down your top 3 obstacles.
Getting Things Done: the Art of Stress-Free Productivity by David Allen
GTD in a nutshell

- Capturing anything and everything that has your attention
- Defining actionable things discretely into outcomes and concrete next steps
- Organizing reminders and information in the most streamlined way, in appropriate categories, based on how and when you need to access them
- Keeping current and “on your game” with appropriately frequent reviews of the six horizons of your commitments (purpose, vision, goals, areas of focus, projects, and actions)
...and that means....?

- Processing inboxes to empty
- Capturing ideas and tasks
- Setting up a reference system
- Lists for Actions, Projects, Waiting For, and Someday/Maybe
- Calendar or Tickler file for reminders
- Weekly Review
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Collect: ubiquitous capture</th>
<th>6. Organize: everything has a place</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5. Simple System</td>
<td>10. Find your passion</td>
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My kryptonite: Time Management

Have to find the trick that works for you:

- Routines
- Rules
Tricks

Work in Bursts
● 50 minutes, 10 minute break

Focus
● reduce interruptions
● Get in "the zone"
● eliminate temptation

18 minute plan
● 5 minutes at beginning of day: plan
● 1 minute review each hour
● 5 minutes at the end of the day - review
Conserving time & energy

Set Goals
- Project timelines & objectives
- Plan important tasks by the week
- Schedule enough time for preparation, getting places

Set Monthly Themes
- Vaguer than goals, but still useful
- "This month I will improve my email skills"
- Follow your rhythms
Break!

Don't be a slave
Schedule your email time

- Turn off email notifications
- Set times to check messages
  - 10 minutes every hour
  - 3 times/day
  - whatever works for you
- Just tell yourself no one will die if they don't get an immediate response!
Triage

Medical
- beyond help
- can be helped by *immediate* response
- response can be *delayed*
- *minor* injuries, who need help less urgently

Email
- delete it
- archive it
- defer it for later response
- generate an action from it
- respond to it immediately
  (2 minute rule)
Folders

The inbox is not your to-do list!

- Archive folders
- Needs Action
- Follow Up
- Read Later
- Not to me

From http://www.flickr.com/photos/nypl/3110130720/
Filters/Rules

Automate some of the work - that's what computers are for!
- Anything with "FW:" in the subject line
- Anything with "fyi" in the body
- Filter by specific sender
- Listservs/committees
- Vendors!

- [http://support.csp.edu/Outlook_Filters](http://support.csp.edu/Outlook_Filters)
- [http://mail.google.com/support/bin/answer.py?answer=6579](http://mail.google.com/support/bin/answer.py?answer=6579)
- [http://email.about.com/cs/hotmailtips/qt/et102101.htm](http://email.about.com/cs/hotmailtips/qt/et102101.htm)
Most email clients have search functionality - use it!
Templates

Don't type out the same messages over and over

- Quick Parts in Outlook
Yes, really. I totally give you permission.
Inbox Zero!
Email Exercise!

Make a plan for **ruthlessly** processing the backlog:

- Schedule time chunks: 1 hour/day
- Reduce by half & repeat
- Fresh Start: chuck the whole thing in a DMZ Folder
- Archive or delete anything more than 30 days old. Be honest - are you ever going to respond to that? We all know the answer is no.

Fun help: http://www.43folders.com/2006/03/27/process-to-zero
Break 2!

Calendars

- Keep it current and relevant
- Schedule stuff!
  - Deadlines
  - Recurring tasks
  - "Me" time (or a "no-fly zone" if you want to sound less selfish)
  - Reminders
- Keep it with you (sync w/phone, pda, or paper)
- The calendar is your friend!
To-Do lists

To-Do Lists, like email, can get out of control

● Keep it Do-able
  ○ Give yourself orders: What's the next step?
  ○ Use specific, active words

● Keep it simple
  ○ Easy to remember and track
  ○ Daily/Weekly/Someday

● Keep it tiny
  ○ 3 Most Important Tasks (MITs)

● Keep it moving
Prioritizing

- Assign priorities!
- What NOT to do.
  - Eliminate tasks that are sucking time & energy

Reminders

Automate what you can
● Calendars
● To-do Lists
● Ticklers
Weekly Review

- Email: Review and prune Hold and Follow Up email folders. Bump up anything that’s been languishing in Follow Up for too long on to-do list.
- To-do list: Read over current task list; prune stuff that doesn’t matter any more; re-prioritize items to work on next week.
- Projects: Move any “next actions” for each project to the to-do list; Revise and prune the project list to reflect current status.
- Calendar: Check out next week’s appointments and meetings; add any necessary prep work to to-do list.
Tools

- Remember the Milk: [http://www.rememberthemilk.com](http://www.rememberthemilk.com)
- Outlook
- Pen & Paper
- ReQall: [http://www.reqall.com/](http://www.reqall.com/)
- Evernote: [http://www.evernote.com](http://www.evernote.com)
- Gmail Tasks: [http://www.gmail.com](http://www.gmail.com)
Other tools

- Netvibes: http://www.netvibes.com
- iGoogle: http://www.google.com/ig
- Dropbox: http://www.dropbox.com
- KeePass: http://keepass.info/
- Springpad: http://springpadit.com/
- Todoist: http://todoist.com/
What are your suggestions?

From http://www.flickr.com/photos/statelibraryofnsw/2960116125/
Questions?

Here's mine - what did you find the MOST helpful about today's session?

From http://www.flickr.com/photos/statelibraryofnsw/2959326615
Thanks!

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