



How To Be A Productivity Ninja

Graham Allcott

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In the age of information overload, traditional time management techniques simply don't cut it when it comes to overflowing inboxes, ever-expanding to-do lists and endless, pointless meetings. Thankfully there is a better way: The Way of the Productivity Ninja.

Using techniques including Ruthlessness, Mindfulness, Zen-like Calm and Stealth & Camouflage you will get your inbox down to zero, make the most of your attention, beat procrastination and learn to work smarter, not harder.

Written by one of the UK's foremost productivity experts, How to be a Productivity Ninja is a fun, accessible and practical guide to staying cool, calm and collected, getting more done, and learning to love your work again.

How To Be A Productivity Ninja Details

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Author : Graham Allcott

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From Reader Review How To Be A Productivity Ninja for online ebook

Claudia - says

Time management is dead, long live attention management.

In the olden days, you got a stack of mail on your desk in the morning, which you dealt with and then went on to do your usual work. These days are well and truly over: internet, intranets, email and social media are with us 24/7 and we feel pressured to react and respond to everything at once.

Unfortunately, we all have only a finite amount of attention to give, which is easily frittered away in panicky attempts to do too much too inefficiently.

Enter Graham Allcott, founder of Think-Productive. He has distilled the wisdom of hundreds of business seminars into this handy little book to help us get organised, de-clutter our minds and desks and become altogether calmer, happier and more productive.

A good amount of this book is dedicated to organising your to-do-lists, streamline action plans and clearing your inbox. Once in place, this acts like a second brain, freeing up time for thinking, reviewing and tackling projects clearheaded.

Followed by strategies to overcome sloth and actually do some work and handy tips to avoid tedious meetings, this book makes for a well-rounded manual to sharpen up your work methods.

To be honest, I'm not the target audience of this book and some of the higher end stuff went straight over my head. However, I too am a procrastinator and advice like 'turn the internet off, the world isn't going to end' and the rehabilitation of mono-tasking make refreshing common sense.

Chad says

This is a massive collection of productivity hacks from authors and bloggers. I'm not sure if there is anything new here at all. I might appreciate this more if I wasn't familiar with the sources (which are cited, by the way, so no issue there).

Stephanie says

I have read quite a lot of books about productivity, how to stop procrastinating, getting things done etc. But this is the first time I was actually enticed to follow some of the recommended actions, as they were straightforward, easy to comprehend and solution-focussed. Obviously a lot of these books are just common sense collections of dealing with stuff, this one no exception. But while most are often too theoretical or analytical this one actually gives actionable advice. Not everything will apply to everyone, of course, and I am cherry-picking the sections that I can (hopefully) benefit from, but its main idea really is to actually getting things done and making it as easy as possible for your brain to do so. The best advise being to formulate your To Dos in actionable ways, precise and to the point, in small steps that will eventually lead you to finishing your project, and the difference and awareness of being in decision-making (boss) or doing

(worker) mode.

Right at the end it somewhat loses its focus, repeating itself and frankly 'waffling' a little bit, but overall it provides clear and practical advice of organising yourself, getting things done and overcoming your own resistance. I've started to implement some of the strategies, so fingers crossed it'll work.

Suzi Dafnis says

Speed read this one for an interview with the author. Great guy. Great book. Very practical and loads of detail. The chapter on email management alone is worth getting the book for.

Henk-Jan van der Klis says

Many books are written and courses are given about time management. Graham Allcott wants to go beyond that and learn you how to think and act like a Productivity Ninja. Allcott merges Getting Things Done (David Allen), The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People (Stephen Covey), The War of Art (Stephen Pressfield), Meeting Together (Lois Graessle, George Gawlinski, Martin Farrell), Linchpin (Seth Godin) into his own practice, worth sharing. In the age of knowledge work and a never ending stream of information inputs you have to make smart choices. Think of Clay Johnson's Information Diet as a starter.

Graham learned it the hard way. After writing and teaching these principles over and over again, he discovered how much his own productivity could be improved. Still room to improve left. He doesn't want to be imaged as some kind of guru. So, don't focus on some of his jargon like mindfulness, inbox zero, stealth and camouflage, or zen-like calm. Unlike other time management the aim is not just to show how much more you can do in any given time, but to stay calm and in control. That's where e.g. the review moments of Getting Things Done (GTD) are so important. Attention management is one of the key features in this book. Avoid distractions, schedule time to act on the really important tasks, begin with the least attractive or most difficult ones to avoid procrastination. Worry less, achieve more and love what you do. Learn how CORD (Capture & Collect, Organize, Review and Do) as new habits set can help. Perform the exercises provided at the end of each chapter. Reconsider the use of email, calendar, task and note applications. Let this all work for you instead of getting imprisoned by the requests of others. Maybe it's good to apply the stealth techniques for a while, learn some lifehacks or to spend that first hours to collect all your to-do lists and 'projects' in a single 'system' to start all over. I enjoyed to see so much known principles and practices collected here, offering me fresh insights as well.

Sergei_kalinin says

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Ting Tong says

I wonder now why I bought this book as I am the most organised and efficient person I know but I was hoping there would be more tips and ideas of how I could improve further. Unfortunately a lot of the things suggested I already do or are not relevant as I don't work in a typical office. That said I can speak from personal experience that a lot of them do help you become more productive. If you're a person that struggles to get things done and you always feel stressed and overwhelmed by your workload and lack of organisation then this book is definitely for you. It's simple stuff like organising emails into folders, creating rules and putting time aside to check them and then different time to work through and process them so you always have an empty inbox and are less likely to check it so often. Another suggestion was to get a system in place like an app to store all your projects and to action checklists so you can review them and order them in terms of relevance and deadlines. I recently started using the app Trello and I can honestly say it's been so useful for me personally; when it's on there it's not in your head anymore and it's across platforms so you can access it on the laptop and on your mobile if you're on the go. One tip I did get from the book was thinking about when to schedule tasks based on how I'm feeling so for example if I'm flagging in the middle of the day to schedule in some easy and mundane tasks that don't take as much effort as oppose to trying to drag myself through something heavy. The only other thing that was discussed was how to conduct a productive meeting and so really there were so many other ways that could have been suggested to improve productivity that I'd say don't bother reading the book come and talk to me and I'll sort you out!

Richard says

I've read a lot of books on Productivity over the years, but "How to be a Productivity Ninja" stands out as one of the best. It draws on famous productivity books such as Getting Things Done by David Allen and blends the advice within those well known books with the author Graham Allcott's own experiences and thoughts.

My favourite chapter was near the end of the book where the author looks at running an effective meeting. The advice within this chapter was worth the price of the book alone, and for anyone who has ever wasted their time sat in a meeting with no seemingly clear purpose or direction - then this chapter will be essential reading.

From getting to inbox zero to getting started and maintaining momentum on a project and everything in between, "How to be a Productivity Ninja" is my new recommended "must read" for anyone who is struggling to feel in control or achieve more in their day-to-day life.

Zoffix Znet says

I *wanted* to like this book. The Ninja theme and the drawings on the cover and on the initial pages were fun and they dragged me into reading this book up to page 90.

It is at that point I realized I still haven't learned a single useful thing from this book. All it did was introduce meaningless and vague metaphors and make ludicrous and simplistic assumptions. The Ninja is Ruthless, The Ninja is Mindful—well, that's freakin' great, but isn't helpful in the least. The assumption that we have a

static rhythm of when our attention is high or low is overly-simplistic and asinine—you can't make schedules based on that, as the book proposes you should do.

Several of the things the book recommends I outright disagree with. It advocates you deliberately let all calls go to voicemail, under a premise that when you call back, you'd be midway into the conversation already. Utter nonsense; advice not grounded in reality. Not only you'll be annoying everyone who tries to reach you, by the time you navigate your voicemail system, write down caller's info, and call them back, you'd have wasted a load of time—both yours and the caller's—not to mention most voicemails would be just names and numbers, so there'd be no midway conversations.

The "boss/worker mode" (another stupid metaphor) attention use is also nonsensical. The book argues you should spend your most active, most energetic, most aware, most awake moments of the work day making schedules and lists and *planning* what you're supposed to be working on, instead of actually using that energy for getting down and doing quality work.

I flipped through the rest of the book and saw pages about "meditation," "second brain," "5-milestone model," "emotional fallout," a 5-item list of the **types** of lists you're supposed to have, and a full-page productivity model chart. It's clear to me the rest of the book will contain more awkward and meaningless metaphors and more "productivity" ideas that do more damage than good.

The positive reviews for this book rave about all the tips the book provides that you can use straight away. All true, but my question is: do those tips *actually* make you more productive? Do you *actually* accomplish more or do you only get *deluded* that you're productive because you've surrounded yourself with schedules and checklists that you're constantly making and checking off. Based on what I've read, I think the latter is true.

Here's my tip on how to be more productive: **avoid this book.**

Drae Box says

I bought this thinking from the reviews on Amazon that it might be useful, but in all honesty, if you have a handle on most things, it isn't. This book assumes you are in complete shambles with every element of your life, and then provides you with overly complicated processes to get things back under control.

It would be handy for someone looking for a way to get their life sorted, but there's also so much fluff (which though usually expected in non-fiction, just continued throughout the book). Each section went: fluff. Small exercise. Sad really, as it could have been really helpful to others, and half (maybe even a third) smaller in size.

I did like the internal formatting though - it was organised like a school book, but if you like your serif fonts (Times New Roman, Georgia), expect sans-serif (Arial, etc.) instead.

Elise Edmonds says

This was a reread. My fav productivity book ever. I use some of the principles every day and fancied a refresh as my job has changed recently.

Holly says

I'll start this in saying that I found the majority of this book great - but like a lot of self improvement books, not everything written is going to be relevant to everyone who reads it. For example, there was a whole chapter on meetings in this book that wasn't really of use to me at all.

That said, I took a lot of useful information from this title. Some of it might be said to be common sense such as doing your hardest task first thing to get it done and working with your attention flow rather than against it, but I did find these useful to read about and have since implemented some actions into my life. I did find the tip on organising my inbox very useful, and for the past few months I have been much more organised working with my inboxes laid out in the way suggested - plus a few additions of my own.

All the lists to work from just seems too much for me. I'm not one to have five lists and work between a master list, project list, waiting for list, weekly list, daily list and good ideas list. However, as I said before we are all different and this approach may work for people. I feel that elements of these lists will work for me so I am incorporating some of them into my life and seeing how that goes.

My final take on How to be a Productivity Ninja is thus - it's all useful information, but it might not all be useful for you. Read it, and see what is helpful - to be honest, most of it was for me.

The Idle Woman says

Fun, engaging, with plenty of diagrams and a perky British sense of humour, this is one of the better productivity books I've come across. As others have noted in reviews, I felt that Allcott relied quite heavily on principles developed by earlier writers - David Allen's "Getting Things Done" loomed large, as always - and there's a fair amount of simple common sense. Nevertheless, he brings it together in a playful fashion that is very much aimed at a UK audience. I always really appreciate this, as I've found many of the American books in this genre to be over-earnest and not really applicable to anything but a conventional office workplace. It's currently (2017) pretty much up to date in terms of the apps and technology it recommends, and it's good that it does suggest specific programs because David Allen's "Getting Things Done" deliberately steers away from this. However, that does mean it'll date pretty quickly. I don't think I'm committed enough to buy into the whole Ninja thing myself - I prefer making up my own system - but Allcott has some bright ideas, reinforcing and encouraging some of the principles I've picked up from elsewhere. Worth a look for a bit of light relief, or a more down-to-earth approach than some of the US offerings.

Paul says

Allcott is offering here a solution to the email overload, the tedious meetings, the office politics and the general bedlam that is the modern working life.

He offers methods of dealing with your working challenges in today's office. There are solutions for getting your email to zero, the best way to run a meeting, methods of getting organised and suggestions on the best way to deal with your work load.

A lot of it is very similar to the GTD religion method as developed by David Allen, but Allcott brings a British slant and humour to his book. As a business book it is readable, as similar books can be humdrum and frankly dull, and this isn't. A useful book, in some ways, and one I may yet buy.

Cody Faldyn says

In his book Allcott combines all of his teachings from his public productivity workshops from all around the world into a simple, effective guide to working faster and smarter. The goal of the book is to teach you how to overcome procrastination, how to use email more efficiently, new ways to increase your personal time, and how to declutter an information overload.

For your convenience, I had Graham Allcott on my podcast, The Entrepreneurs Library, to give a deep dive on *How To Be A Productivity Ninja*. With Graham's experience he gives amazing insight on how to master the art of productivity. If you would like to hear a real review from the author himself check out **episode 189** on the EL website or you can find the show on iTunes.
