

SIMPLE BRAIN HACKS TO GET MORE DONE

Based on the work of David Rock "Your Brain at Work" and Nir Eyal, NirAndFar.com



HOW TO STOP FORGETTING IDEAS

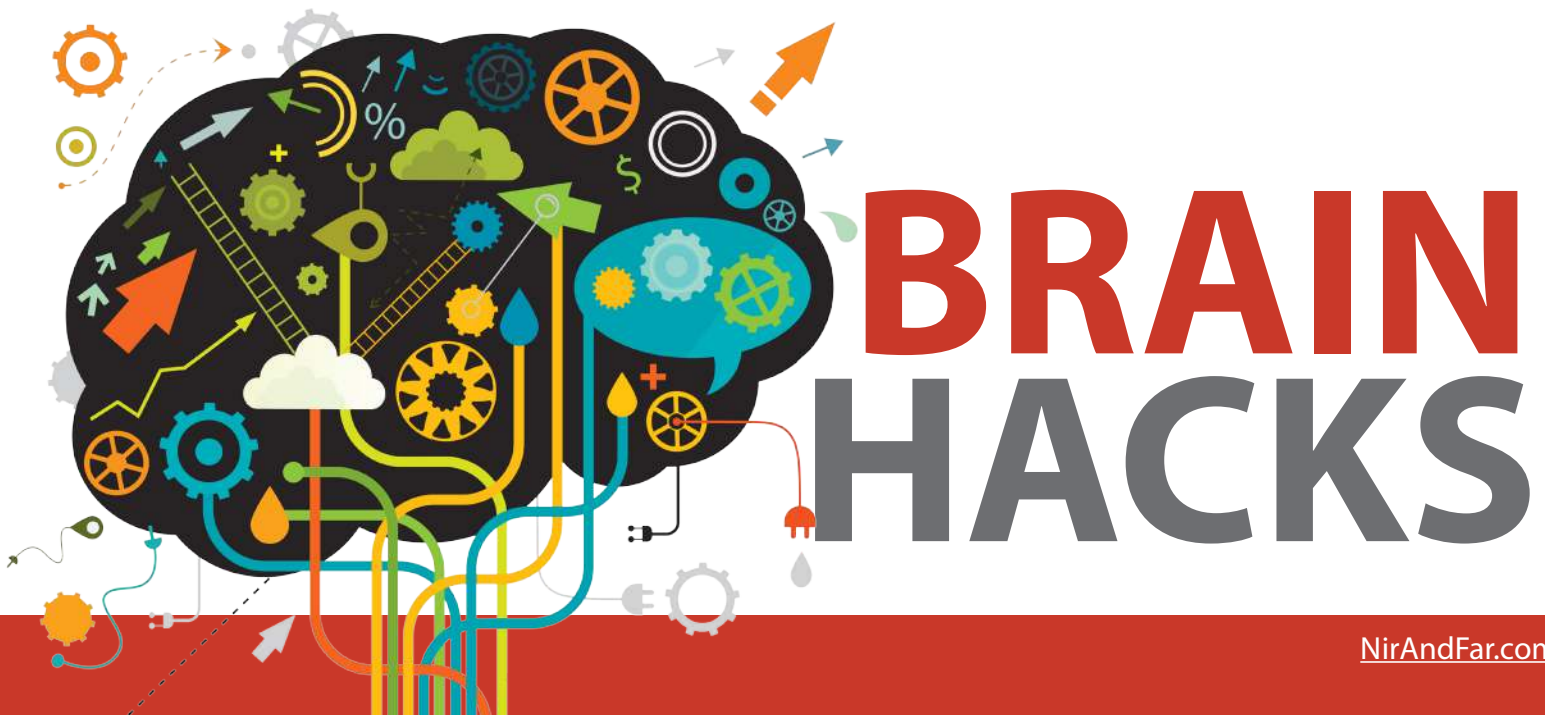
Get information out of your head.

- ▶ **Speak it to yourself out loud, record it.** Speaking out loud to yourself helps your brain process the information in a different way. Send voice notes to friends or employees, or try an app like [Braintoss](#) to send voice memos with two taps.
- ▶ **Use visuals, draw pictures, maps, figures.** Your brain can process a lot of simultaneous information with pictures. Use visual tools in your notes to help you understand a concept or to help you describe ideas to other people.
- ▶ **Tell someone else, write an email, text it.** Don't hold ideas and thoughts in your head, share with your friends or family before they eventually melt away.
- ▶ **Write stuff down immediately.** The longer you hold something in your mind, the more it will fade over time. Write it down before it fades. Put a note pad near your bed, in your car, in your wallet, or in your gym locker.

HOW TO TACKLE BIG PROJECTS THAT ARE HARD TO THINK ABOUT

Simplify the information you have.

- ▶ **Forget details, zoom out to the big picture.** Your brain can't hold too many details at once. Worry about specifics later and focus on the big picture first. Identify major components, challenges, and overall project goals.
- ▶ **Simplify to 2 choices or 3 concepts.** Reduce big ideas or decisions to a few concepts or choices. Decisions are easier with fewer choices because it is easier for the brain to compare and contrast 2-3 items versus 6-7.
- ▶ **Chunk information down.** The brain can only hold a small number of pieces in working memory at once. Make 'chunks' of information to reduce the number of pieces. Example 768994320 vs 768 994 320
- ▶ **Use storyboards for a rough timeline.** Write out tasks or ideas on index cards and lay them out on a table. Arrange and rearrange the pieces to find a timeline of events, then identify which pieces can be done at the same time.



HOW TO SUCK LESS AT MULTITASKING

No one is good at it. If you must, here's how...

► Choose the tasks carefully.

Not all tasks can be combined. Multitasking is hardest when tasks require focus. Do difficult tasks one at a time while pairing tasks together.

► Automate your tasks.

Make habits. The more embedded these behaviors are, the less mistakes you make when multitasking.

► Use memory triggers.

Go easy on your brain and make useful information triggers. Make reminders, set alarms, create calendar events, use lists, and write notes to yourself.

► Use to-do lists even for things you'd remember.

To-do lists are not just for things you might forget. Add tasks you want to turn into routines as well. Writing down daily tasks like "meditate" or "take a walk" will provide a sense of satisfaction when checking them off your list.

HOW TO BECOME A MENTAL BLOCK NINJA

Lighten up the cognitive load and take it easy.

► Remove bad distractions.

Visual distractions can impair focus. Remove both physical and virtual clutter from your desktops. Avoiding distraction will help stay focused on the task at hand.

► Get a fresh perspective.

Nonlinear solutions are needed to sidestep mental blocks. Describe the problem to someone else who has little understanding to get a new approach to the issue. Try describing it to a fifth grader.

► Use technology to unplug.

Use apps like "[Self Control](#)", "[Freedom](#)," and "[Forest](#)" to disconnect from distracting technology when you need to focus.

► Get happy.

Stress and anxiety can kill creative processes. If you get stuck, take time to boost your mood with laughter. Keep a funny book handy or listen to a comedy podcast for a few minutes.

TAKE BETTER BREAKS

Certain types of breaks enhance focus while others drain you.

► Doodle or color.

Letting your mind wander creativity between tough tasks can help you focus better when you get back to work.

► Schedule time to think.

Some insights can only come from focused thinking time. Give yourself the time to work through tough problems on your own.

► Walk in nature.

Taking some time to walk outdoors can provide the change of scenery you need to think more creatively.

► Take a 5-minute meditation break.

Numerous studies have found meditation can enhance learning, memory, and emotional regulation. Try an app like "[Headspace](#)" or "[Calm](#)" to build a meditation routine.

YOU'RE NEVER DONE

Finding ways to work smarter is a never-ending process. Try these other tips.

► Repeat your ideals daily.

There's power in keeping important ideals top of mind and we need to repeat them daily to make them sink in. Just as prayer reminds believers of their purpose, you can create your own daily mantras of what matters most to you. Find meaningful quotes and use your phone's reminder app to read them daily until you know them by heart.

► Review and adapt.

Take a few minutes to review what went well that day and what could have gone better. Then, think of one actionable way to improve the next day.

► What's tomorrow's priority?

Every night before going to bed, take the time to write down the single priority item you resolve to complete the following day to move you or your business closer to your goals.

► Create a "stop doing" list.

Make a list of any and all habits, routines, or people in your life making you less productive and taking you farther away from your desired quality of life. Cut out all the crap that's not making your life more meaningful.



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Nir founded two tech companies since 2003 and has taught at the Stanford Graduate School of Business and the Hasso Plattner Institute of Design at Stanford. He is the author of the bestselling book, [Hooked: How to Build Habit-Forming Products](#).

Nir & Far

Tips based in part on the book by
[David Rock, Your Brain at Work](#)

From the blog at [NirAndFar.com](#)