

# GETTING YOUR INBOX TO ZERO™

- GAIN CLARITY & FOCUS
- DO YOUR BEST WORK



NOTES



# GETTING STARTED



You're about to embark on a new email habit which will potentially change your life forever! Seriously.

## THE 4 STAGES OF GETTING YOUR INBOX TO ZERO



With the help of this Workbook and the accompanying videos on our **YouTube** Channel, we'll be guiding through **The 4 Stages of Getting Your Inbox to Zero**.

We can get this done in about 90 minutes if we don't get too bogged down at each stage – you can always come back to some of the tips and videos at the end.

Right now, let's focus on getting you to zero!

## YOUR FIRST STEP:



Let's locate the videos you'll be watching:

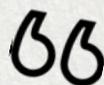
- ▶ Search **YouTube** for the **Think Productive** channel
- ▶ Choose a **Playlist**:
  - **Get Your Inbox to Zero on Outlook** or
  - **Get Your Inbox to Zero on Gmail**

If you use a different email platform, these videos should still be able to guide you through the process!

## REMEMBER THIS WISDOM:



Think 80/20 or even 800/20!



Make sandwiches, don't just take orders.

Merlin Mann, 43Folders.com



# OUTLOOK USERS

## STAGE 1

## SETTING UP YOUR INBOX



It's time to set up your mailbox with its 3 processing folders at the top of your email folders list: @action, @read, @waiting.

These 3 folders become your way of converting your emails into actions. That way your inbox is ONLY a place where new stuff lands, before it is processed and defined.



### YOUR 3 PROCESSING FOLDERS

#### @action Folder

'Defer' your actionable emails here, to come back to as soon as possible, allowing you to keep your inbox empty.

#### @read Folder

Where you can easily store items that still need to be read until you have time to read them.

#### @waiting Folder

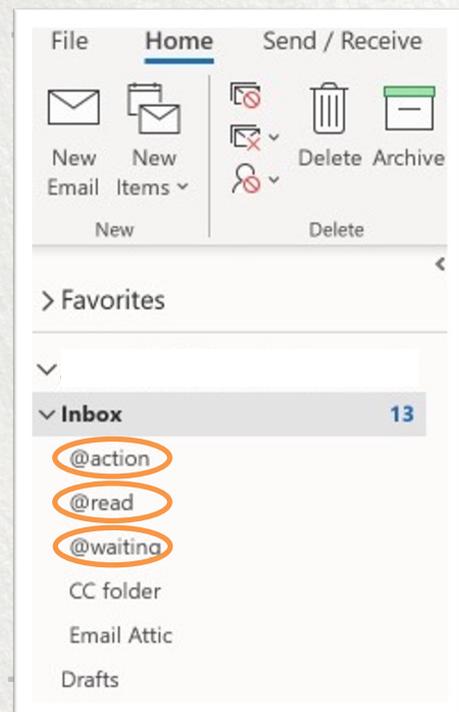
A place for you to 'track' those emails that you are waiting on others to action, so that you don't forget them.

### STEP 1. LET'S SET UP THE 3 FOLDERS!

1. In Outlook mail, right click on 'inbox' (left hand side)
2. Select "New Folder..."
3. Type in "@Action"
4. Click OK
5. Repeat the steps for "@Read" and "@Waiting"

### STEP 2. HEAD TO YouTube

-  Watch: Turning off notifications
-  Watch: Delete Often and with Confidence



# OUTLOOK USERS

## STAGE 2

## HACKING



**Hacking is the process of bulk filing and bulk deleting. This is a crucial stage of Getting Your Inbox to Zero for the first time.**

"Hacking" involves looking for opportunities to say no and hit delete, weeding out all that unnecessary noise and quickly identifying the relatively small number of items that do need further attention.

### NINJA TIPS



While hacking, the mindset should be ruthless and big-picture focussed (resist the temptation while hacking to ever read any email all the way through!)



On Outlook, the three most obvious views are to sort emails by:  
Who they're **FROM**  
The email's **SUBJECT**  
The email's **DATE**

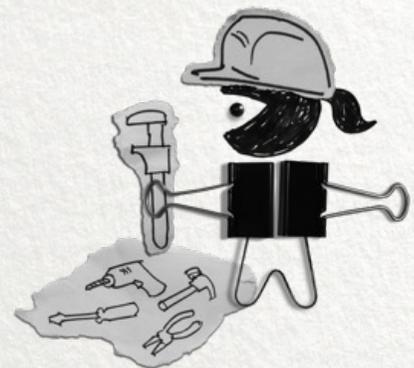
### YOUR NEXT STEP:



To get started on the Hacking stage, head to our **YouTube Channel** and work through all the Stage 2 **Outlook videos**.



If you get stuck at any point, or are struggling to get started, please let your Productivity Ninja know, as they are here to support you through this process!



# EMAIL

## GMAIL USERS

### STAGE 1

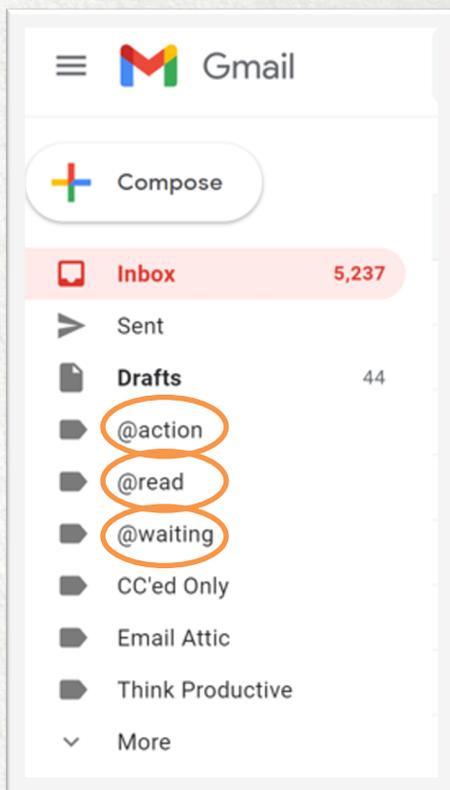
## SETTING UP YOUR INBOX



It's time to set up your Gmail with its 3 processing folders at the top of your email folders list: @action, @read, @waiting.

These 3 folders become your way of converting your emails into actions. That way your inbox space is ONLY a place where new stuff lands, before it is processed and defined.

In Gmail, your 3 processing “folders” will be “labels” at the top of your Google Mail labels list.



### LET'S SET UP THE 3 FOLDERS!

1. Click the Settings Icon (cog wheel) in the top right-hand corner.
2. Click “See all settings”.
3. Click the “Labels” tab (second from the left).
4. In the “Labels” section click the button “Create new label”.
5. Type “@Action” in the box to name the label.
6. Click “Create”.
7. Repeat the steps for “@Read” and “@Waiting”.

### YOUR NEXT STEP: YouTube

 Watch: Turning off notifications

### NINJA TIP



The use of the ‘@’ sign allows these folders to be at the top of your labels list so that you can see them and process to them as easily as possible.

# EMAIL HACKING

## STAGE 2

## HACKING



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"Hacking" involves looking for opportunities to say no and hit delete, weeding out all that unnecessary noise and quickly identifying the relatively small number of items that do need further attention.

### NINJA TIP



While hacking, the mindset should be ruthless and big-picture focussed (resist the temptation while hacking to ever read any email all the way through!)

### NINJA REFERENCE



Here are some handy Gmail search tips which you'll learn to use on the videos.

#### Our Top 5 Gmail search operators:

- ▶ From:
- ▶ To:
- ▶ Subject:
- ▶ Has:attachment
- ▶ "Exact Phrase"

#### Searching by Date examples:

- ▶ in:inbox older\_than:100d
- ▶ in:inbox older\_than:6m
- ▶ in:inbox older\_than:2y
- ▶ in:inbox before:2015/01/31
- ▶ in:inbox before:2015/01/31 after:2011/12/31

### YOUR NEXT STEP:



To get started on Hacking, head straight our **YouTube Channel** and work through all the Stage 2 **Gmail** videos.



If you get stuck at any point, or are struggling to get started, please let your Productivity Ninja know, as they are here to support you through this process!

# STAGE 3

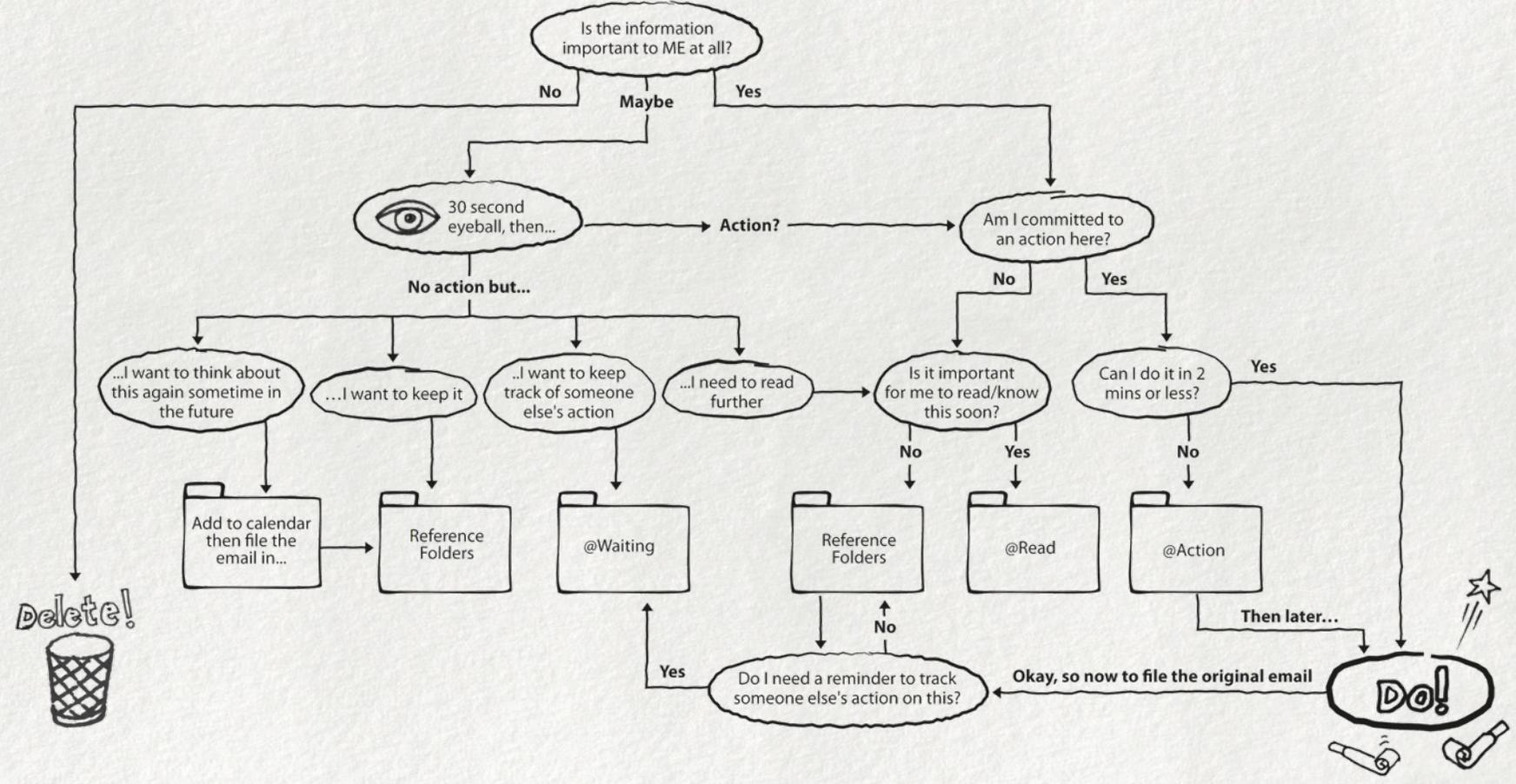
# PROCESSING ONE-BY-ONE

# OUTLOOK & GMAIL USERS



This diagram will help you confidently make quick and smart decisions when it comes to processing emails one by one. Head to the Stage 3 YouTube videos now to get started.

## Ninja Email Processing...



This diagram is an excerpt from Graham Allcott's "How to be a Productivity Ninja" book (which you'll be getting an ecopy of!).

# OUTLOOK & GMAIL USERS

## STAGE 4

## INBOX TO ZERO - COMPLETED!



**CONGRATULATIONS!** Your inbox is at, or very close to zero. The fog has been lifted and you finally have some well-earned clarity. If you're loving this feeling, you'll want to keep your inbox tidy and under control going forward too...

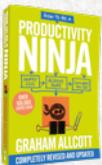
### WHAT'S NEXT?



**Optimise your mailbox further** – check out the **Stage 4** videos on our **YouTube** channel for some more advanced moves.



**Head over to the Productivity Ninja Academy** where you'll find more exclusive resources to help cement your new and improved email habits. (You'll gain access as soon as you complete your Survey at the end of this Workshop).



**Deep dive into Graham's "How to be a Productivity Ninja" book** (your eCopy is waiting for you in the Academy). There is a whole chapter dedicated to email!



**Start a conversation in your team about your communications culture across all platforms.** Your Productivity Ninja can come back to help you set some ground rules.



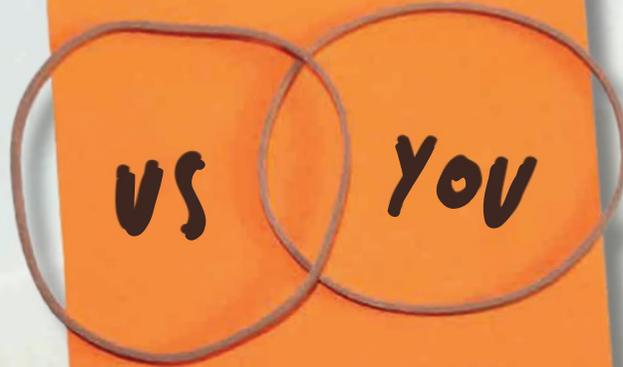
**Last but not least, find a way to celebrate that your inbox is at zero!** Really savor the feeling of clarity, to help you build it into a habit that sticks.

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## Find Out More

We can help your entire organization make space for what matters by getting back in control of workloads, emails and meetings.

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**Contact your nearest office**

[www.thinkproductive.com](http://www.thinkproductive.com)



Share your productivity journey!

**@thinkproductive**  
**#ProductivityNinja**