* Put simply, GTD is a method for organizing your to-dos, priorities, and your schedule in a way that makes them all manageable. One of GTD's biggest benefits is that it makes it easy to see what you have on your plate and choose what to work on next. It also has a strong emphasis on getting your to-dos out of your head and into a system you can refer to. This clears your mind of any mental distractions that will keep you from working efficiently.
* That all sounds great, but GTD also has a reputation for being complicated. It doesn't have to be, but part of the reason why it's earned that reputation is because there's no one, rigid, "right way" to practice it. There are lines to stay inside of, but there's no "do this, then do that, and put these into that category" kind of rulebook. There's no preferred app to use or journal to buy to make it work. Part of that vaguery makes it easy to [remix and personalize it to match your needs](http://lifehacker.com/build-your-own-productivity-style-by-remixing-the-best-5828033), but it also makes it difficult to approach.  
    
  **Capture** everything. Your to-dos, your ideas, your recurring tasks, everything. Put it in a pen-and-paper notebook, a to-do app, a planner, whatever you prefer to use to get organized. GTD doesn't say to use a specific tool, but whatever you use has to fit into your normal flow. The barrier to using it should be so low that there's never a reason for you to say "I'll add it to my list later." You want to capture everything as soon as it happens so you don't have to think about it again until it's time to do it.
* **Clarify** the things you have to do. Don't just write down "Plan vacation," [break it down into actionable steps](http://lifehacker.com/trick-yourself-into-working-by-breaking-down-tasks-to-a-5793211) so there's no barrier to just doing the task. If there's anything you can do right away and have time to do, get it done. If there's anything you can delegate, delegate it. [Here's a helpful video where David Allen explains how to clarify your to-dos](http://lifehacker.com/david-allen-explains-how-to-master-your-to-do-list-5986867) so they don't require more time to figure out what you meant than it takes to actually do the thing you wanted to do.
* **Organize** those actionable items by category and priority. Assign due dates where you can, and set reminders so you follow up on them. Pay special attention [to each item's priority](http://lifehacker.com/david-allen-explains-why-priority-is-essential-to-your-955604064), as well. You're not actually doing any of the items on your list right now, you're just making sure they're in the right buckets for later, and your reminders are set. In short, this is quality time with your to-do list, inbox, and calendar.
* **Reflect** on your to-do list. First, look over your to-dos to see what your next action should be. This is where the clarifying step pays off, because you should be able to pick something you have the time and the energy to do right away. If you see something that's so vague that you know you won't be able to just pick up and run with it, break it down. Second, give your to-do list [an in-depth review periodically](http://lifehacker.com/the-weekly-review-how-one-hour-can-save-you-a-week-s-w-5908816) to see where you're making progress, where you need to adjust your priorities, and determine how the system is working for you.
* **Engage** and get to work. Choose your next action and get to it. Your system is, as this point, set up to make figuring that out easy. Your to-dos are organized by priority and placed in categories. You know what to work on, and when. They're broken into manageable, bite-sized chunks that are easy to start. It's time to get to work.