

Zettelkasten workflow in Obsidian according to DeepSeek

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What is the simplest way to use the Obsidian software to implement the Zettelkasten note taking system? I would like to control the use of tags explicitly. One idea is to drop tags with hashtags and instead make a tag-note in a special folder called “Tags”. So instead of using #tag I will use [[tag]] - a link. In this way I can manage the tags in a simple way. Is this a good idea?

Absolutely! Let me walk you through a **complete workflow** for using **tags as links** in Obsidian, step by step. This system replaces traditional #hashtags with [[tag]] links and organizes tags in a dedicated folder for better control and flexibility.

Step 1: Set Up Your Vault Structure

1. Create a “Tags” Folder:

- In your Obsidian vault, create a folder named Tags. This will store all your tag notes.
- Example structure:

```
My Vault/  
├── Tags/  
├── Notes/  
└── Templates/
```

2. Optional: Create a Templates Folder:

- If you want to use templates for consistency, create a Templates folder and enable the **Templates plugin** in Obsidian.
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Step 2: Create Tag Notes

1. Create a New Tag Note:

- For each tag, create a new note in the Tags folder.
- Example: If you want a tag for “Productivity,” create a note named Productivity.md in the Tags folder.

2. Add Metadata to Tag Notes:

- Use YAML front matter or plain text to add context to your tag notes. For example:

```
---
```

```
description: Notes related to productivity techniques, tools, and strategies.  
related: [[Time Management]], [[GTD]]
```

```
---
```

3. Optional: Use a Template for Tag Notes:

- Create a template for tag notes to save time. For example, in the Templates folder, create a file called Tag-Template.md:

```
---
description:
related:
---
## Notes tagged with [{{title}}]
```

- When creating a new tag note, apply this template using the **Templates plugin**.
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Step 3: Link to Tags in Your Notes

1. Use `[[tag]]` Links:

- Instead of using #Productivity, link to your tag note using `[[Productivity]]`.
- Example: In a note about time blocking, you might write:
Time blocking is a powerful `[[Productivity]]` technique that helps you manage your time.

2. Create Bidirectional Links:

- When you use `[[tag]]`, Obsidian automatically creates a bidirectional link. This means:
 - You can click on `[[Productivity]]` in your note to navigate to the Productivity.md tag note.
 - The Productivity.md tag note will show a backlink to the note where it was referenced.
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Step 4: Build Indexes in Tag Notes

1. List Notes Linked to the Tag:

- In your tag notes, manually or automatically list all notes that reference the tag.
- Example: In Productivity.md, you might write:

```
## Notes tagged with [[Productivity]]
- [[20231015-Time-Blocking]]
- [[20231014-GTD-Overview]]
```

2. Use Backlinks for Automation:

- Obsidian's **Backlinks** feature automatically shows all notes that link to a tag note. You can use this to avoid manually updating the list.
 - Example: In Productivity.md, scroll to the bottom to see all notes that link to it.
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Step 5: Organize and Explore Your Tags

1. Use the Graph View:

- Open Obsidian's **Graph View** to visualize the relationships between your notes and tags.
- Tags will appear as nodes, and you can see how they connect to other notes.

2. Create a Master Tag Index:

- Create a note called Tag-Index.md in your Tags folder to list all your tags.

- Example:

```
# Tag Index
- [[Productivity]]
- [[Time Management]]
- [[GTD]]
```
-

Step 6: Maintain and Refine Your System

1. **Regularly Review Tag Notes:**
 - Periodically review your tag notes to ensure they are up-to-date and relevant.
 - Merge or split tags as needed.
 2. **Rename Tags Easily:**
 - If you need to rename a tag, simply rename the corresponding tag note. All links to the tag will automatically update.
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Example Workflow in Action

1. **Create a Tag Note:**
 - Create Tags/Productivity.md with the following content:

```
---
description: Notes related to productivity techniques, tools, and strategies.
related: [[Time Management]], [[GTD]]
---
## Notes tagged with [[Productivity]]
```
 2. **Link to the Tag in a Note:**
 - In a note about time blocking, write:
Time blocking is a powerful `[[Productivity]]` technique that helps you manage your time.
 3. **Update the Tag Note:**
 - In Tags/Productivity.md, add a link to the time blocking note:

```
## Notes tagged with [[Productivity]]
- [[20231015-Time-Blocking]]
```
 4. **Explore with Backlinks:**
 - Open Tags/Productivity.md and check the **Backlinks** section to see all notes that reference it.
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Benefits of This Workflow

- **Centralized Tag Management:** All tags are stored in one place, making them easy to manage.
 - **Rich Context:** Tag notes can include descriptions, related tags, and links to other notes.
 - **Flexibility:** You can easily rename or merge tags without breaking links.
 - **Scalability:** This system scales well as your vault grows.
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By following this workflow, you'll have a powerful and flexible tagging system that enhances your note-taking and knowledge management in Obsidian. Let me know if you have any questions or need further clarification!

Comment

This workflow is somewhat similar to the one suggested by Odysseas in his popular YouTube video in the references.

I also do not believe in the use of timestamps in filenames, and using dashes “-” instead of the more natural spaces in file names. But the rest of the ideas are interesting.

References

- *Obsidian: The King of Learning Tools (FULL GUIDE + SETUP)* Video by Odysseas