

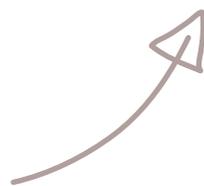


# How to be a Productivity Ninja

# Use the 9 Characteristics of the Productivity Ninja



IMPROVE PRODUCTIVITY  
AND WELLBEING WITH  
NINJA-STYLE MINDSET,  
HABITS, TACTICS AND TOOLS



# The 9 Characteristics of the Productivity Ninja

1

## Zen-like Calm

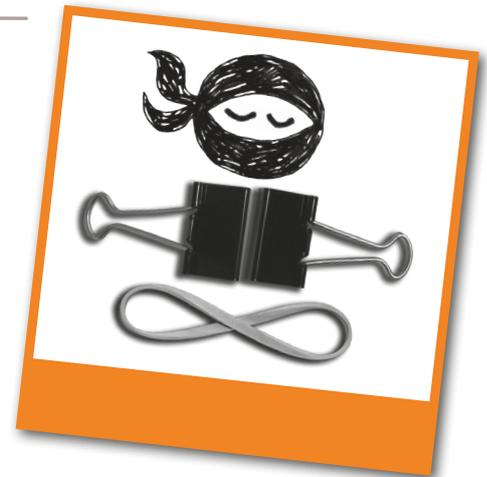
That sense of calm and control, where your focus is fully in the moment. You know how productive you are when you have a deadline? Well that's because it forces you to focus and be Zen-like. It's possible to experience that sense of focus, just without all the stress of the deadline!

### Strategies

- ▶ Quieten the noise and distraction inside your own head.
- ▶ Create the right environment for playful, productive momentum.
- ▶ Thinking is different from doing – and we need to do both.

### Tactics

- ▶ Use your head – get it all out of your head (to somewhere else).
- ▶ Whatever helps you get in the zone – and stay there!
- ▶ Separate the thinking from the doing ('Boss' mode and 'Worker' mode).



“ You may not believe this, but it is entirely possible to have a hundred and one things to do and still remain absolutely calm. ”

GRAHAM ALLCOTT, 'HOW TO BE A PRODUCTIVITY NINJA'

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## Ruthlessness

Sounds scary. And sometimes it's not easy. But Productivity Ninjas use their Ruthlessness wisely, lovingly and with good intent. Sometimes we need to challenge, and to make difficult choices.

### Strategies

- ▶ Control your environment, protect your attention.
- ▶ Deploy loving self-ruthlessness where needed. Realism and pragmatism, while fighting procrastination.
- ▶ Also use ruthlessness with others – and their expectations.

### Tactics

- ▶ Create your attention bubble, and ruthlessly defend it.
- ▶ Be ruthless with yourself. You can't do everything. Focus on impact.
- ▶ Be honest. Haggle. Deflect. Perfect the power of saying “no”.



“ It's about our ability to protect our time and attention, focusing only on the things that add the greatest impact. ”

GRAHAM ALLCOTT, 'HOW TO BE A PRODUCTIVITY NINJA'

# The 9 Characteristics of the Productivity Ninja

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## Weapon-savvy

Productivity Ninjas love good apps, gadgets and software hacks. Select your trusted Ninja tools wisely, and stick with them to ensure maximum productivity.

### Strategies

- ▶ Create and use a trusted 'second brain' system for tasks and projects.
- ▶ Cut through email, Productivity Ninja-style, to 'Inbox Zero'.
- ▶ The 'savvy' part is about focusing on useful, not just shiny or cool.

### Tactics

- ▶ 'Second brains' hold the info and noise, so you can do the thinking.
- ▶ Use apps for: focus, habits, tracking, hacks, automation, comms – and so much more.
- ▶ Seek out the geeks and early adopters to help you optimize your tech.



“The Productivity Ninja is skillful on their own, but knows that the right tools make them even more effective.”

GRAHAM ALLCOTT, 'HOW TO BE A PRODUCTIVITY NINJA'

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## Stealth & Camouflage

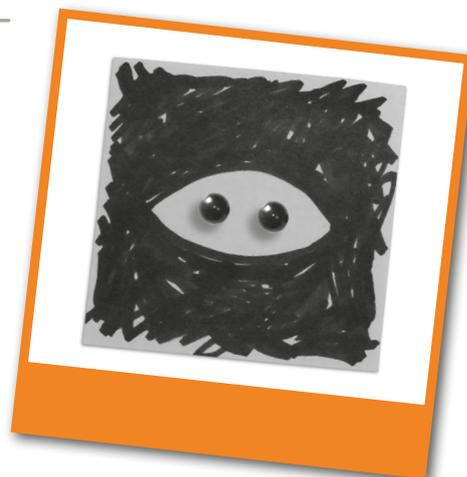
If you're always available, people are always going to want you. We need to balance communication and 'team play', with regular retreats off-stage to get our solo work done with attention and focus.

### Strategies

- ▶ Actual tactical hiding (yes really, but you do have to emerge eventually).
- ▶ Digital stealth: get offline and unplugged. Tune out those message and alerts. They can wait. Peace.
- ▶ Misdirection: throw them off your trail to get your work done.

### Tactics

- ▶ Get away from your desk. Be where they won't find you.
- ▶ Notifications off. Autoresponders/diverts on. Logout.
- ▶ Desk signs/signals. Calendar camouflage. 'Meetings for One'.



“One of the worst things you can do is always make yourself available. It's an invitation to some of your biggest enemies: distraction and interruption.”

GRAHAM ALLCOTT, 'HOW TO BE A PRODUCTIVITY NINJA'

# The 9 Characteristics of the Productivity Ninja

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## Unorthodoxy

Challenge the status quo. Ask provocative questions. Break rules. Do it differently; shake things up. Make it silly; fun; a game. The unusual can help you get unstuck when you're procrastinating and need to create momentum.

### Strategies

- ▶ Why do I/we do it this way? Seek fresh inspiration from elsewhere.
- ▶ Create your own Productivity Laboratory for yourself and team.
- ▶ Add fun and games. Make it a competition.

### Tactics

- ▶ How would an entrepreneur, artist, child or superhero tackle this?
- ▶ Make changes. Monitor results. Keep what works, discard what doesn't.
- ▶ Be irreverent. Be guerrilla. Laugh. Take the pressure off. Use challenges and scorecards.



“What's important is the end result. It doesn't matter if you use the conventional route to get there or find an easier path.”

GRAHAM ALLCOTT, 'HOW TO BE A PRODUCTIVITY NINJA'

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## Agility

There'll always be surprises, crises and occasional 'firefighting'. Productivity Ninjas stay agile and light on their feet. But that sort of nimbleness doesn't come for free – it requires set-up and practice.

### Strategies

- ▶ Think like firefighters – prevent, prepare, react, debrief, recover.
- ▶ Don't let 'small and now' get done at the cost of 'big and later'.
- ▶ Slice and dice your actions by place, person or 'attention level' for full Ninja agility.

### Tactics

- ▶ Did it go wrong? What could I/we do so it's different next time?
- ▶ Batch up small tasks. Create longer windows for deeper attention.
- ▶ Think "where/when/how shall I do these?", not just "what do I have to do?".



“A productivity Ninja needs to be light on their feet, able to respond with deftness to new opportunities or threats.”

GRAHAM ALLCOTT, 'HOW TO BE A PRODUCTIVITY NINJA'

# The 9 Characteristics of the Productivity Ninja

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## Mindfulness

Oh, that hippie, trendy, spiritual management-speak thing? All a bit woo-woo? No, actually. It works. It's simple, but can seem hard. It helps you get savvy about your biggest productivity tool – your own brain.

### Strategies

- ▶ Actual mindfulness and meditation – or power naps if you prefer.
- ▶ Know yourself. Work out where the resistance to certain tasks is coming from.
- ▶ Don't get lost in the day to day. Step back. See the big picture.

### Tactics

- ▶ Not tried meditation? There are great apps to get you started.
- ▶ Use mindfulness to create more Zen-like Calm productivity time.
- ▶ Regular reflection. Are you moving your 'big rocks' (big priorities) along?



“Our minds are our most important tool. Being emotionally intelligent and self-aware are important for so many reasons.”

GRAHAM ALLCOTT, 'HOW TO BE A PRODUCTIVITY NINJA'

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## Preparedness

Know an annoyingly-organized person? They'll be all about Ninja Preparedness. Not always glamorous, but super-important for unleashing your very best work. Plus you can colour-code stuff.

### Strategies

- ▶ Create scaffolding/systems. Hone skills and tools.
- ▶ Checklists and reviews. Daily and weekly 'Boss mode' thinking.
- ▶ See your rest as vital preparation for productivity. More hours = diminishing returns. Know when it's time to stop.

### Tactics

- ▶ 'Being organized' takes work in itself. Invest in set-up. Get weapon-savvy.
- ▶ Quick daily boot up. Longer stealthy Weekly Review for thinking and planning.
- ▶ Set a home time. Stick to it. You'll do it twice as fast in the morning.



“This underpins and strengthens the other Productivity Ninja Characteristics – it's about practical as well as mental preparation.”

GRAHAM ALLCOTT, 'HOW TO BE A PRODUCTIVITY NINJA'

# The 9 Characteristics of the Productivity Ninja

9

## Human, not Superhero

Productivity Ninjas often look like super heroes. But there are no special powers. Sometimes we screw up (so make that OK). And know that as a Ninja – and human – you have limits.

### Strategies

- ▶ Create cultures that recognize and celebrate ‘being human’.
- ▶ Whole person care – a Knowledge Worker’s brain needs a healthy body.
- ▶ Don’t beat yourself up when you (inevitably) make a mistake.

### Tactics

- ▶ Accept we’re all fallible/imperfect.
- ▶ These (and more) matter: breaks, nutrition, hydration, exercise, rest, recharging, sleep and fun.
- ▶ Write a ‘have done list’ to remind you you’re brilliant.



Productivity Ninjas are not superhuman – although they sometimes appear to be so!

GRAHAM ALLCOTT, 'HOW TO BE A PRODUCTIVITY NINJA'

Be a

## Productivity Ninja

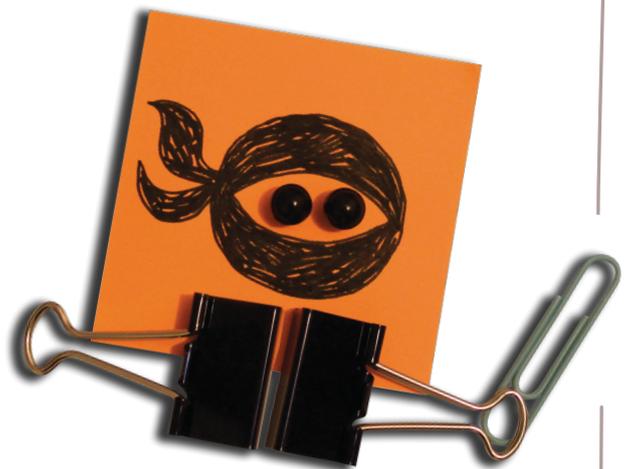
You now have all 9 Characteristics of the Productivity Ninja at your disposal. Next, you need to think about an initial personal/team Action Plan, as well as how to make those changes stick!

### Action Plan

- ▶ Work on your Productivity Ninja Action Plan to identify ways you can use each of the 9 Characteristics. Introduce changes to habits, new tools, techniques and tactics that suit YOU, your work, and your environment.

### Making it Stick

- ▶ Challenge. Experiment. Monitor. Adjust. Use individual and team level Productivity Ninja skills. Today is just the start. Put a time in your diary (in a week, or in a month’s time) to review or share your progress. And most importantly, have fun with it. Good luck. You’ve got this.



# Action Plan

① ZEN-LIKE CALM

② RUTHLESSNESS

③ WEAPON-SAVVY

④ STEALTH & CAMOUFLAGE

⑤ UNORTHODOXY

⑥ AGILITY

⑦ MINDFULNESS

⑧ PREPAREDNESS

⑨ HUMAN, NOT SUPERHERO

# Feeling empowered? Here's how else we can help



**Stress Less,  
Achieve More**

(FULL DAY)



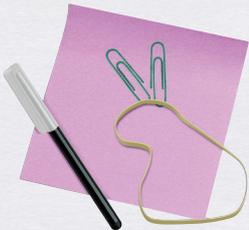
**Getting your  
Inbox to Zero**

(HALF DAY)



**Email  
Etiquette**

(HALF DAY)



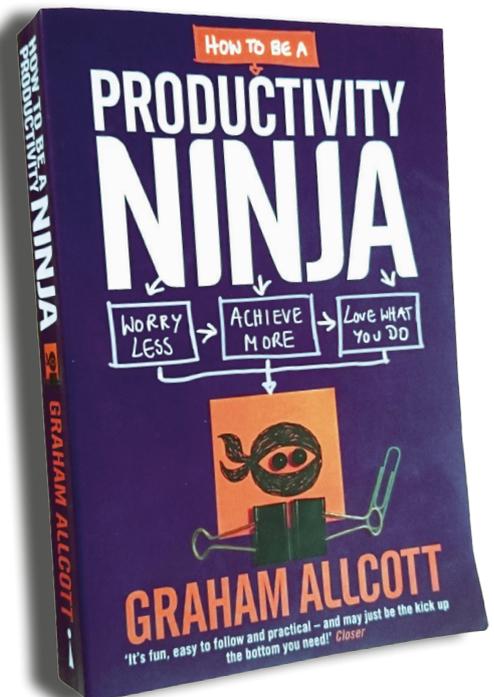
**Making  
Meetings  
Magic**

(HALF DAY)

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WORKSHOP  
OVERVIEWS ON  
OUR WEBSITE



**READ ME!**



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