The Seven-Day Intention Capture Plan

A practical experiment for remembering future actions without keeping every unfinished intention active in your head.

Built from prospective-memory research on cognitive load, cue detection, strategic monitoring, and the aftereffects of completed intentions.

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One Trusted Capture Point

For seven days, put every delayed intention in one visible place: a card, planner, or task list. Capture an action, not a vague topic. Write “send the revised brief after lunch,” not “brief.” Add the cue that should bring the action back: a time, place, person, or event.

Daily protocol

1 · Capture	Write the next observable action and its trigger.
2 · Externalize	Stop mentally rehearsing once the intention is recorded.
3 · Review	Check the list at two fixed transitions: start of work and after lunch.
4 · Complete	Mark the action done immediately after it is finished.
5 · Deactivate	Remove completed cards so old cues do not keep retrieving them.

Seven-day log

DAY	INTENTION + CUE	DONE?	WHAT INTERRUPTED IT?
1		☐	
2		☐	
3		☐	
4		☐	
5		☐	
6		☐	
7		☐	

End-of-week review

☐ Which cues reliably brought intentions back?

☐ Which intentions were too vague to execute?

☐ Did one capture point reduce checking and mental rehearsal?

Evidence notes

Ball & Peper (2023), strategic monitoring meta-analysis, Q J Exp Psychol; Walter & Meier (2020), completed-intention aftereffects systematic review, Psychol Bull; Cruz et al. (2020), demanding activities and prospective memory systematic review, Acta Psychol.

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