

Tools And Items Needed For GTD Setup

The GTD method is a very customizable solution. As such, there is a recommended list of items you can use to help implement GTD in your life but there is no mandate anywhere that says you HAVE to use a specific set of tools. While you will see lots of websites, articles, and even apps all offering you tips and tricks on how to implement GTD their way you will as you go through the process generally figure out what works best for you and your needs.

That being said, below you'll find a reference of potential items and tools that you might use either during implementation or when in full GTD mode based on the book and other official and unofficial resources. In purple there are notes to elaborate more on certain items and at the bottom I list some of the additional tools the group's members use as an example of what we do in our group's document - see the goals document for more info here: <http://bit.ly/srGTDgg>

Remember: The key to GTD is that it's not about the "system" as much as the methodology and taking advantage of the natural way the mind works. If you worry too much about trying to create a fancy system or you ignore your natural habits and tendencies in order to emulate someone else's setup you will end up hating it and not staying current and thus not getting the benefits of GTD. Again, none of this is mandatory – find what works best for you!

The Basics – For Initial Implementation Phase

- A pen or pencil
 - ★ *Recommendation #1: Choose which ever medium you prefer writing in and will let you feel free to write whatever you want.*
 - ★ *Recommendation #2: Have multiple pens or pencils in each of your work or note-taking areas. This way you won't find yourself unable to capture that million-dollar idea or be interrupted in the middle of making progress on your project when you find your pen has gone "missing" or the tip on your pencil breaks.*
- Standard set of general 'office' supplies, paper clips, binder clips, Scotch tape, rubber bands, and stapler with staples
 - ★ *You may not end up using all of these items but it's great to have them on hand at the start until you figure out what you need and use regularly.*
- A wastebasket and recycling bins
 - ★ *No explanation needed; in the initial collection phase you'll hopefully use them a lot!*
- A calendar (digital or physical)
 - ★ *A calendar is a key component of the system and keeping current. One of the basic premises behind the GTD method is that once you are aware of all the things you have committed to you can feel more confident when you're making choices of what to do at any given moment. A calendar makes sure you're aware of any time-specific based commitments you can't miss - e.g. you **have** to meet with your boss on Monday at 3 pm.*

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- Three paper-holding trays
 - ★ *Not sure what a 'paper-holding tray' is? Think of the stereotypical image of an office desk with the little 'IN' box holding an overflowing tower of papers – that's a paper holding tray. Whether you get the stacking kind or not, you'll want at least 3 trays (or tray-like objects) to start with, for the implementation phase: one as an in basket, one as an out basket, and one or more for work your progress support papers or 'to read' pile.*
- File folders (3-tab or 5-tab non-hanging manila type)
 - ★ *Unless required by your office setup, get the plain manila folders NOT the hanging kind. Personally, due to how the file cabinets I already owned were designed I use hanging folders but only as holders for the manila folders so it is still easy to file things quickly.*
- A stack of plain letter-size paper
 - ★ *You can use other sizes of paper, or even index cards, but make sure they are large enough that you feel you have the room to write freely and quickly and can fit a regular sized post-it note on top of it; printer/copy paper is recommend.*
- Post-It notes
 - ★ *It is recommended that you start with at 3 inch by 3 inch sized notes, if you can.*
- An automatic labeler
 - ★ ***I highly recommend!*** *This is the kind that comes with "tape" so that you type in what you want on the label and then it prints it on the label as you type or after you hit print. This makes it easy to label and clearly see what each folder (or item) is.*

Additional Work Area Or Collection Tools

In addition to the above, as you finish implementing and continue practicing GTD there are other tools and items you may end up using regularly. Most of the below people already use on a daily basis (the "Duh"s) while the rest is a selection of recommendations from GTD practitioners:

- Computer
- Printer (preferably within reach, if you can, as it'll save you lots of time)
- Email program (desktop or web-based)
- Digital note-taking tools (computer or mobile apps/software, PDAs, etc.)
- Additional paper based note-taking devices (notepads, journals, index cards, etc.)
- Phone with answering machine/voicemail
- Vertical sorters/racks/holders for your file folders (for important in-progress projects)
- Filing cabinets (in reach with nice, smooth gliding drawers to make filing painless)
- Office supply holders to keep everything organized and within reach
- Contact database (analog or digital 'rolodex' of names, telephones, and addresses)
- Additional office supplies: scissors, batteries, stationery, envelopes, blank CDs/DVDs, flash drives, small tools, etc.

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Example Of Some Of Our Group's Individually Used Items

The below are examples of how we show items in the document that individuals in our group specifically use that are not already listed above:

Person A:

- Bookshelves
- Whiteboards
- ScanSnap Scanner
- Shredder
- Tickler File
- Travel office supply kit
- Accordion file folder pouch
- External hard drive
- Lap desk or car seat desk/tray
- Asana
- Thunderbird
- Google Calendar
- Evernote

Person B:

- "Someday/Maybe" box
- Whiteboards
- Tickler File
- Google Calendar
- Gmail

Person C:

- Jira
- Google Calendar
- Text Files
- Shredder

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