



# Catch All Notebook Quick Start Guide

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**One** of the biggest myths of managing time, tasks, thoughts, reminders and daily life is the belief that because our lives are complicated our systems must also be complicated. I have tried keeping files for each day of the week, index systems, electronic information devices, and many other handy-dandy-organizing gadgets, only to lose the Tuesday folder, accidentally send a note to school on the back of my Wednesday to-do card, or forget to change my batteries and lose all the information stored in my \$500 fool-proof-gadget.

I am not proud of the fact that I have owned a Blackberry, a Treo, a Palm Pilot—you name it. Each time chaos came I assumed I must be using the wrong system. Perhaps a different size binder might work, or different tabs, or maybe the pretty pink paper would lure me to write everything down in its proper place.

All of these solutions worked brilliantly—for about two weeks. Then the magic wore off. One day as I sat amidst my piles of planners, realizing I had now run out of purchase options, I realized one of two statements must be true:

- 1. It was impossible for me to efficiently manage my day-to-day life.**
- 2. These systems didn't match my needs**

Long ago I chose to remove the word “impossible” from my vocabulary; therefore I focused on the second statement. I took an in-depth look at each abandoned “solution,” trying to figure out where the system had failed me. It didn't take long to draw several conclusions:

The system had way too many options for where to record my information.  
The system did not provide enough room to keep all my daily thoughts and notes near my task items. Some days were blank, other days were overflowing.

What I needed was a simple system that could keep up with the daily demands of living. *Instead of customizing my life to meet the planners on the market I needed a versatile system that could be customized to suit me.*

What I invented was The Catch-All-Notebook (CAN). The CAN increases efficiency, maximizes time, and helps reduce stress—and it is simple. This Quick-Start Guide will help you set up your new CAN kit to match your needs.

### THE CAN CONCEPT

We all have days where we feel our brains are elsewhere—but indeed they are with us 24/7. The CAN quickly becomes a spare brain and should be with us 24/7 too. Used consistently, all the whirling thoughts in your mind are cleared into the CAN and your mind is then left with room and energy to focus instead of spin.

By having a functional notebook-partner, you don't have to remember everything. Instead, you consult your trusted CAN. When distractions or worries relentlessly fill your mind, you record them in the CAN and reclaim your internal hard drive. Many people find the CAN to be a foreign way of tracking to-do items. If this describes you, realize past efforts and results are the driving force that brought you here. Give this new system a try — even if it seems a bit out-of-the-ordinary. I have a collection of notes from participants who have credited the CAN to be a life-changing tool. You will be able to see for yourself shortly.

Beginning to use your new system is simple. Open the notebook, write down the date and then anything that comes to mind in the pages that follow. Don't worry about what goes where—if it is on your mind, write it down. The CAN's main purpose is to “catch everything on your mind.”

Items you'll find in my CAN pages:

<i>Grocery lists</i>	<i>Phone numbers</i>	<i>Meeting notes</i>	<i>Reminders</i>
<i>Confirmation numbers</i>	<i>Affirmations</i>	<i>Reflections</i>	<i>Gift ideas</i>
<i>Books to read</i>	<i>Web sites</i>	<i>User names</i>	

Anything and everything I write down during a day goes in my CAN—then it is never lost! Then I add my specific active tasks for **the day**—but before we can do that we need to create your Active Task List.

### ADDING ACTIVE TASKS (A.K.A TO-DO ITEMS)

Active Tasks include any tasks you need to manage, work on, or complete *this week*. Beginning at the top a page (about 10 pages in) record any action items (to-dos) that you need to do this week. (Remember, record tasks only for **this week**.) Mark this page with the Active Clip.

### CREATE YOUR SHORT-TERM ACTION LIST

The Short Term Action List is used to manage or remember tasks that need attention within the next 30-60 days, but not this week. (Choose whether to use 30 or 60 days based on the pace and schedule of your life. I like to use 30 days.) This is usually the longest list in the CAN. Place the Short-Term Clip on a blank page approximately two-thirds into the notebook, leaving one-third of the notebook blank between the clip and back cover. Write Short Term Action List at the top of this page. Any time you think of tasks that need to be managed, completed, or remembered within this time frame, add them to this list. Since you will likely access this list often, the page marker provides quick access.

### WHY IT WORKS

*Recent neuroscience studies have worked to identify common practices amongst highly-functioning individuals. Keeping a notebook handy at all times to record passing thoughts, tasks, ideas and notes was an almost-universal trait of the studied individuals, including Albert Einstein and Michelangelo. The research summarized three beneficial findings of this practice:*

- *By keeping the notebook handy 24/7, it becomes reliable and a place to confidently store “mind-matter.” By transferring thoughts, tasks, ideas and notes from mind to paper, the mind is free to focus on the task at hand.*
- *The act of writing something down makes it more concrete, and statistically, increases the odds of accomplishing and remembering the written task*
- *By having all information accessible (within arm's reach) individuals are better able to maximize unexpected free time slots (even 5 to 10 minutes)*

The first time you do this exercise it may take a while to write down all the items. Or you may create an initial list and then find 10 more tasks come to mind tomorrow. Don't worry—that is natural and will pass as you maintain this practice. Going forward you will have a workable list to manage.

### WHAT ABOUT EVERYTHING ELSE?

Using these two simple sections, Active or Short-Term, for recording tasks has proven to be a breakthrough for many women because it matches how we think. Most planning systems are too complicated to match how we think during a busy day. We set up a detailed system only to find we write the wrong thing in the wrong place or can't find the specially marked tab. The CAN is your active daily assistant.

When we are busy it is unlikely we will pause and reflect, *Hmmm... is the optimal location for this task?* In reality our thinking is much simpler: *Do I need to do this now or later?* The Active Task List is your "now." The Short-Term Action Items is the impending "later."

Long-term planning and projects require a different approach and should be kept separate from "active" items in order to maximize efficiency. (One of the biggest ways we lose time is combining action and planning. When we plan, we should plan. When we act, we should act.) The Catch-All Notebook is about action. To learn about longer term project and planning solutions check out the Make Today Matter Planning Binder.

### NIGHTLY

Each night draw a line to start a new entry. Begin with the date. Then write down the items you will complete the following day. This is not your entire active task list—just the focus for the day. Make sure to star three-priority items you commit to getting done or use the Three Step Action List card (pictured at right) to highlight these items.

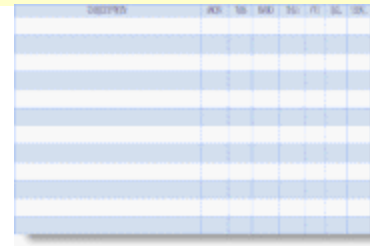
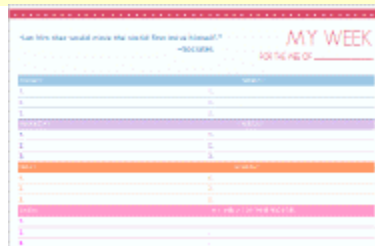


It is also a good practice to record things you are grateful for at the end of each day. Included in this kit are gratitude cards (pictured at left) for that purpose. Write down three things you are grateful for. With 21 lines per card, each card is ready for a week of gratitude.

### ONCE-A-WEEK

Once a week go through your Short-Term list and check for any items that need to move to your Active Task list.

## ADD-ON TOOLS AVAILABLE FOR CATCH-ALL NOTEBOOKS LEARN MORE AT [WWW.MAKETODAYMATTER.NET](http://WWW.MAKETODAYMATTER.NET)



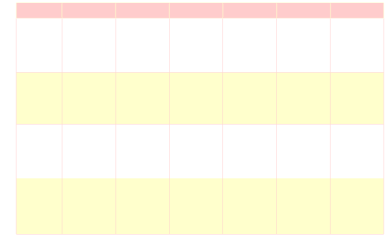
Enhance your Catch-All Notebook with a variety of tools—mix and match to meet your needs with Power Hour cards, My Week Cards, Daily and Monthly trackers, pouches and pockets, and more! Visit [www.maketodaymatter.net](http://www.maketodaymatter.net) and click on Catch-All Notebook refills and supplies to view all the offerings!

## VERSATILITY

The following steps will guide you through how I have customized my CAN. I recommend reading through the instructions and following along.. But... avoid adhering any of the pockets. (This way you can resituate them if you think of a different way that is more user-friendly.) The great news is that by using cards—nothing is permanent! Mix, match, swap, add, take away and fine tune your system until you have exactly what you need.

## BLOCK OUT YOUR PLANS

The blank calendar blocks can be used to create an at-a-glance monthly calendar that is small and portable. Or you can use them to manage the day by writing Monday-Sunday across the top and using the rows to record AM, PM, or categorize the rows by family member.



## DECORATE!

Find the Art Cover with the self-adhesive pocket. You can place this pocket on the cover of your CAN or inside. I like to put mine on the front and then I swap out covers once a week with a resonating quote.

## COLLECT YOUR CONTACTS

I keep my Contacts card in the thin, tall adhesive pouch. This way it is well protected and I can transfer it from CAN to CAN. On this card I record only phone number I use very frequently.



## GIVE THANKS

It is a good practice to record things you are grateful for at the end of each day. Included in this kit are gratitude cards (pictured on the previous page) for that purpose. Write down three things you are grateful for. With 21 lines per card, each card is ready for a week of gratitude.

## ADD FOCUSED ACTION

The Three-Step Action list is for recording three priority items you commit to completing each day.



The intention is simple: sometimes the day gets away from us. By focusing on three key items each day we make sure we end the year by completing over 1000 carefully chosen action items.

## MY CAN COVER-TO-COVER

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- Front Cover: I have my art cover and swap this out weekly to offer inspiration applicable to my current focus
  - Front inside cover (left): Corner pocket—This is where I keep my Three-Step Action List or “My Week Card” (available separately)
  - Back cover (outside): I have a self-adhesive pouch here with my calendar block for “at a glance” access
  - Back inside cover (right): My contacts pouch and contacts card
- (The two items below are on the heavy piece of white paper just inside the back cover)**
- Back of white paper (facing contacts card): I keep my gratitude list in a self-adhesive pouch on this page
  - Front of white paper (facing last lined page of journal) I have a self-adhesive corner where I keep my Power-Hour card (available separately)