

Project Lab (Overwhelmed Edition) – October 2022

First things first, this is a workbook that was created to be edited! Go to **File > Make a copy** so you can have your own version to work from!

1 DUMP

1. Let's begin by listing out all your "active" projects in the first column below (add more rows as needed.)
2. Once you've listed them out, define a 2-month goal for each one. What would you like to have accomplished for each one by the end of the next two months?

Active Projects (next 2 months):	Two-Month Goal:

Aside from projects, do you have any random outlier tasks taking up space in your brain? If so, brain-dump them into this list and see if it makes sense to assign them to a bigger project.

Task	Project

2 PRIORITIZE

Now that you can see your active projects listed out, it's time to challenge yourself to order these projects by priority.

 Note: Everyone's going to have DIFFERENT criteria for prioritization, but here are some questions that can help you:

Clarifying questions:

- Which project, if completed, makes everything else **easier**?
- Which project, if completed, would make me the **most fulfilled**?
- Which project best contributes to my most **immediate needs**?
- Which project is integral to upholding my **values**?

The Half Test

Another exercise that could be helpful in gaining clarity on which projects are the most important is the HALF test.

Imagine you **had** to split your number of projects down the middle and could only do HALF, which ones would make the cut? Enter your projects in the table based on which you'd keep and which you'd cut.

✔ Can Do	✗ Can't Do

Remember, this is just a thought exercise. It doesn't mean you have to nix all the projects in the "Can't Do" column. It's only to put yourself in that theoretical position so you can see your own reasoning for which projects you'd want to "save" and which ones you be okay with letting go of. The process of thinking this through might reveal to you which is most important to you.

Your "Focus" Projects

We're all often juggling multiple projects at one time, but that's why it can be extremely valuable to assign ONE project each month as your "focus" project. Your Focus Project is the one that you're going to devote the most intention and effort to. It's defining for yourself ahead of time what one thing you'd really like to make progress on.

1 Next Month:

2 Following Month:

Ranking Your Projects

Now that you've defined which projects are your Focus Projects, let's call those #1 and #2 in your priority ranking. Add them to the table below, along with the rest of your projects. (You can copy over from the table above in Section 1: Dump. Add more rows as needed.)

Rank the rest of your projects in order of priority using what you learned above through the clarifying questions and the Half Test to help you.

You can also denote any projects you want to put **on hold** because you can now see there's just too much on your plate and you want to protect yourself from burnout.



Active Projects (next 2 months):	Two-Month Goal:	Priority Rank
		1
		2
		3
		4
		5

3 ESTIMATE

Now that we've clarified the priority, we need to break down each active project into its tasks so we can see what it REALLY takes to make it happen.

Task Estimation Tools

We have 4 different exercises for planning out tasks for your project (if you haven't done this already): Mind Map, Brain Dump, Category Lists, & Reverse Timeline.

We go over how to use these exercises in the [coaching session for Project Lab 1 \(January 2022\) at Chapter 7, timestamp 31:42](#). You can use whichever format works best for you to brainstorm project tasks if you're just starting a new project.

Wireframes

If you are familiar with our PEWT project planning system (again, check out [Project Lab 1, timestamp 1:23:19](#) for more info!), we also recommend an extra step of "wireframing" as you turn your project ideas into tasks. Wireframing in this case just means sketching out any visual components of your project if necessary because you'll often discover some tasks you hadn't yet thought of when you turn the idea into a visual sketch.

Project Tasks

1. Now that you've brainstormed a bit, make sure you list out the tasks for each of your Focus Projects. (Add rows as needed.)

2. Once you've listed them all out, estimate the time it will take to complete (or change Estimate to "Energy Level" if you like to plan out your day that way).
3. Don't worry about the "DO Date" column, we'll come back and do that in the final section.

Focus Project 1:		
Task	Estimate	DO Date

Focus Project 2:		
Task	Estimate	DO Date

4 CALENDAR

Now it's time to take a look at your calendar and get honest about what you can ACTUALLY accomplish in the next two months.

Go back to your project priority ranking. Roughly block in the weeks or days on these calendars for how long you think it will take to accomplish each project.

This is a great way to see at a glance how many projects you're juggling at a time. It's also great if you want to assign certain days for certain projects (like "Focus Project Fridays"!)

sun	mon	tue	wed	thu	fri	sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

sun	mon	tue	wed	thu	fri	sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

As you look over those calendars, take a moment to ask yourself:

- Does this workload feel doable or like a recipe for burnout?
- Is there a week (or two or three) that feels like it may be too busy?
- Are you setting future-you up for failure by piling too much on your plate?

Make any necessary adjustments!

5 ASSIGN DATES

Now that you know time and energy assessments for your tasks, it's time to assign an official date to every task so you can add them to your calendar!

Go back to your project tasks lists above and enter a DO date, meaning a date you intend on doing that task. You can do this in tandem with your calendar or whatever app you use to manage your schedule.

That's all, folks!

We hope that giving you this step-by-step process for how we break down projects into task and how we prioritize things when we're overwhelmed has helped you.

Don't be afraid to put things on HOLD! If you go through this process and you get the feeling you simply have too much on your plate, listen to that instinct and start stretching out your timelines.