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5 Steps to Stop the All-Day Spiral in 30 Minutes

Universal, easy options that work with any AI tool.

1. EMAIL TRIAGE (8 minutes)

What to do: Cherry-pick 20-25 emails that look important and forward them to yourself in one thread. Copy/paste that thread into ChatGPT or Claude.

Exact Prompt:
"I was out for X days. Categorize these emails: 1) Urgent - needs immediate action, 2) Important - read this week, 3) FYI - can skim later, 4) Delete/ignore. For urgent items, tell me exactly what action to take."

Result: Skip 80% of emails, focus on what matters.



2. MESSAGING DIGEST (6 minutes)

What to do: Copy key messages, share links to important threads, OR take screenshots of crucial conversations from while you were out.

Exact Prompt:
"What were the 3 key decisions made in these messages while I was out? Any project blockers that need my input?"

Result: Know what happened without endless scrolling.



3. CALENDAR INTELLIGENCE (4 minutes)

What to do: Export calendar view OR take a screenshot of your missed meetings.

Exact Prompt:
"Analyze these missed meetings - what decisions were likely made that affect my projects? What context do I need for this week's meetings?"

Result: Walk into meetings prepared, not confused.



4. MEETING RECORDINGS SUMMARY (7 minutes)

What to do: Upload recordings to AI tools like Otter.ai or paste transcripts into ChatGPT.

Exact Prompt:
"Give me action items and key decisions from this recording that I need to act on."

Result: Get the outcomes without sitting through hours of recordings.



5. INDUSTRY NEWS CATCH-UP (5 minutes)

What to do: Ask AI to filter industry updates for actionable insights.

Exact Prompt:
"What happened in [your industry] in the past [X days] that affects someone in my role? Focus on actionable insights, not just headlines."

Result: Stay current without information overload.



No more all-day catch-up spiral → 30 minutes to get back in control
Walk into your first day back feeling informed and ready, not overwhelmed and behind.
You'll know what matters, what can wait, and exactly what to tackle first.
The relief: Instead of that sinking feeling of endless catch-up, you start ahead of the game.