

THE 5-PHASE LEAK TEST

EST. IMPACT: 30–60 minutes
per week

WHAT'S HAPPENING

You don't usually "lose" a whole hour at once. You bleed it out in tiny leaks that happen at the same points of your workflow, over and over.

This is a quick diagnostic to find where the leak is happening so you stop guessing and start fixing the right part.

THE FIX

Run the 5-Phase Leak Test on any task that feels like it takes longer than it should. Pick one real example from this week.

1) INTAKE (How it shows up)

Where did it come from: email, Teams, text, hallway request, sticky note?

Leak sign: too many entry points means you get hit from all sides.

2) CLARITY (Do you know what "done" is)

Can you answer: "What is the exact next action?" and "What does finished look like?"

Leak sign: vague requests create rewrites, rework, and delays.

3) ACTION (Doing the work)

Did you do it in one focused pass, or in 6 interruptions?

Leak sign: you keep restarting the same thing.

4) HANDOFF (Delivering it to the right place/person)

Did it leave your hands cleanly, or did it sit "almost sent" or "waiting"?

Leak sign: drafts, unsent messages, and "I'll send it later" loops.

5) CLOSE (Does it fully exit your brain)

Once it's done, is it truly done, or does it keep coming back as a mental tab?

Leak sign: no confirmation, no record, no capture system.

After you run the test, fix only the phase that leaked. Don't redesign your whole day. Just plug the hole.