

Outsmarting Chaos: A Student's Guide to Organizing and Conquering

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By Prachi Salvi, Peer Wellness Ambassador

Life as a student can be a whirlwind of deadlines, assignments, work shifts, personal commitments, and prioritizing well-being. With so much to juggle, it is easy to feel overwhelmed and lose track of important tasks.

But fear not! In this blog, we will explore the concept of building a "second brain – a multifaceted organization system" and delve into various platforms and tips that can help you stay organized in four crucial aspects of student life: study, work, personal, and health. Coined by productivity expert Tiago Forte in his article, *Building a Second Brain: The Definitive Introductory Guide*, talks about having an external brain that creates a personal system that acts as an external repository for your thoughts, upcoming deadlines, mundane to-do lists, ideas, and any other information.

Integrating this approach into your daily routines will allow you to find a more sustainable work/life/school balance, a key component to achieving overall [wellness](#).

Let us delve into this fascinating concept in more detail.

The Concept of Building a Second Brain

"How many brilliant ideas have you had and forgotten? How many insights have you failed to act on? How much useful advice have you slowly forgotten as the years have passed?"

We feel a constant pressure to be learning, improving ourselves, and making progress. We spend countless hours every year reading, listening, and watching informational content.

And yet, where has all that valuable knowledge gone? Where is it when we need it? Our brain can only store a few thoughts at any one time. Our brain is for having ideas, not storing them.

Building A Second Brain is a methodology for saving and systematically reminding us of the ideas, inspirations, insights, and connections we have gained through our experience. It expands our memory and our intellect using the modern tools of technology and networks."

(Forte, 2023)

This helps you connect the dots between different ideas effortlessly without having to use your memory to store all this information.

By adopting this approach, you can free up mental space to use for more innovative and creative ideas, enhance productivity, use time more effectively.

This way, you have just one place to put everything that goes through your mind and focus on what truly matters to you.

For today, we will be looking at the 4 aspects of your day-to-day life and how we can organize it: Study, Work, Health & Personal Tasks.

Study: Harnessing the Power of Knowledge:

When it comes to managing your academic life, several platforms can help you streamline your studies and make learning more efficient:

- a. **Tracking Apps** *Notion* is one app which can be used for everything. From notetaking to keeping a track of everything, it has everything you need. I have switched over to majorly using *Notion* and *Calendar* for organizing everything that I am going to talk about in this blog. But if you are someone who loves *Excel*, you can use that too! There are many other helpful resources outlined for various purposes.
- b. **Note-Taking Apps**: Platforms like *Notion*, *GoodNotes*, *Evernote*, *OneNote*, offer versatile digital notebooks that allow you to capture lecture notes, research findings, and study materials in an organized manner. You can tag, categorize, and search your notes effortlessly, making it a breeze to find information when you need it the most.
- c. **Study Planning Tools**: Applications like *Milanote*, *Trello* or *Asana* provide visual boards and task management features to create study schedules, set deadlines, and break down complex projects into manageable tasks. By utilizing these tools, you can stay on top of your assignments and ensure a balanced study routine.
- d. **Focus Tools**: There are many productivity apps which you can use to set a timer to avoid distraction and track time. You can use something as basic as your in-build timer app on your phone or if you want to use something aesthetic, use *Forest* or *Be Focused* app.
- e. **Videos**: Watching videos helps! Now you might be thinking that it is so distracting, but there are free live or uploaded videos available on *YouTube* by other students called 'Study with Me.' These videos are like having a supportive study partner by your side, creating a productive environment and boosts your motivation.

Work: Balancing Academics and Employment

For students juggling part-time jobs or internships, keeping work-related commitments in check is crucial. Consider these platforms to maintain a harmonious work-study balance:

- a. **Calendar Apps:** For scheduling and time blocking, *Google Calendar*, *Calendly* or *Microsoft Outlook* can be your go-to tools. By color-coding your tasks and syncing your calendar across devices, you can avoid overlapping commitments and maximize your productivity.
- b. **Project Management Software:** Platforms such as *Asana*, *Monday*, or *Trello* offer collaborative spaces where you can track work projects, delegate tasks, and communicate with teammates. These tools can help you stay organized, meet deadlines, and enhance teamwork.

Personal Tasks: Prioritizing Self-Care and Hobbies

Amidst the academic and professional chaos, to carve out time for yourself and pursue personal interests and growth. This can be anything like learning something new, pursuing a hobby like drawing, creating videos. Anything, really!

Consider the following platforms to nurture your personal life:

- a. **Habit-Tracking Apps:** Apps like *Habitica*, or *Streaks* can help you establish positive routines and track your progress in various aspects of life, such as exercise, meditation, or reading. Building healthy habits can improve your overall well-being and ensure a balanced lifestyle.
- b. **Journaling Apps:** Applications like *Day One* or *Journey* can be your digital diaries, allowing you to reflect on your thoughts, experiences, and personal growth. Writing can be a therapeutic practice that enhances self-awareness and helps you maintain a clear perspective.

Health: Nurturing Your Well-being

Lastly, taking care of your physical and mental health is vital for overall success. Consider these platforms to prioritize your well-being:

- a. **Fitness Apps:** Platforms like *MyFitnessPal*, or *Fitbod* can provide personalized workout routines, track your progress, and offer guidance on nutrition. Regular exercise not only boosts your physical health but also enhances focus and reduces stress.
- b. **Meditation & Mindfulness Apps:** Apps like *Headspace*, *Calm*, or *Insight Timer* offer guided meditation sessions, breathing exercises, and mindfulness practices. These

tools can help you manage stress, improve concentration, and maintain a calm mindset amid the chaos.

Conclusion:

As an international student and young working professional who has personally experienced the struggles on the path to academic success, work life balance and personal growth, I deeply resonate with the challenges that come our way with managing multiple tasks in my day-to-day life.

By integrating carefully selected platforms into your everyday work customized to your personal needs, you can effectively free up our mind space, allowing you to focus more brain power for productive and creative endeavours. Through this concept, you can tailor a combination of apps and tools that align with your unique needs and preferences by leveraging available technology to our advantage.

Resources:

[Tiago Forte – Building a Second Brain](#)



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