

The 3-Step Routine to Stop Over-Preparing

A DAILY ROUTINE TO STOP OVER-PREPARING
WITHOUT LOWERING YOUR STANDARDS

You're not unprepared. You're over-prepared, and it still doesn't feel like enough. If you're highly skilled but feel like you have to prepare far more than your peers before you can start, this isn't a competence problem. Research on perfectionism and imposter feelings repeatedly links them to the habit of treating preparation as a way to avoid being "found out." The preparation feels like safety, so it never ends. This routine tests that belief instead of arguing with it.

You'll need: one real task from your week (low to moderate stakes: an email, a draft, a call), a timer, and about 10 minutes spread across the day.

1. MORNING: Set your "just enough" (3 minutes)

Pick one action you've been putting off or over-preparing for.

1. The action: _____

2. What would I normally do to prepare? (be honest, write the full list)

3. Now cut it down. What are the **essential** preparation tasks only?

- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

4. Exact preparation time I'm allowing myself: _____ minutes

5. My prediction. If I prepare only this much, I expect the outcome to be:

How confident am I that it will go badly? (0-100%) _____%

Why the prediction matters: an experiment only works if you write down what you expect before you see the result. Don't skip this step.

2. DURING THE DAY: Prepare, then go (timer on)

Start your timer and work through only the tasks on your list.

Tick each one off. When the list is done or the time is up, start the action.

If you're not feeling ready, use the readiness rule:

Rate how ready you feel, 0-10: _____

6 or higher → do the action now. You don't need 9/10 to begin. Nobody does.
5 or lower → check the list. If something essential is missing, add it with a time limit (max 10 more minutes). Then go.

A note on this rule: the "6" is not a scientific cutoff. It's a pre-commitment, a decision you make now so you don't have to negotiate with yourself while the anxiety is loud.

3. EVENING: The audit (5 minutes)

Perfectionists tend to turn reviews into self-criticism. Answer these in order and stop at the end.

1. What did I do, and what skill or effort made it happen?

(Credit yourself. "I got lucky" and "anyone could have done it" don't count as answers.)

2. How did the outcome compare with my prediction?

3. Did the extra preparation I would normally have done change anything? If it went imperfectly, what would more preparation have realistically changed?

4. One thing I'd do the same next time: _____

What to expect

On day one, you'll probably feel uncomfortable, and your mind may insist the result was "fine by luck." That's normal. The value comes from repeating it. A few days of predictions compared with outcomes gives you data, and data is harder for the "I'm a fraud" thought to argue with.

Some work genuinely needs deep preparation. This isn't about doing less everywhere. It's about choosing the right amount on purpose, instead of letting fear choose for you.

Still feel the pull to over-prepare?

That's common. Behavior changes faster than the underlying feeling does. The urge to over-prepare is often driven by patterns below conscious thought, and that's what we work on in **Reclaim**, a 24-week hybrid group program that combines online group coaching, self-hypnosis, hypnotherapy sessions and CBT tools to help high achievers start with just enough preparation and feel proud of what they've done.

If you've read this far, you're serious about change.

DM me RECLAIM or WhatsApp me at +961 70 032 162 to join the program.