Hand-Write. Think Better.

It works because writing things down is slower than thinking. When you write, you can only hold one thought at a time. You have to finish the sentence before starting the next one. This forced slowness makes you think more clearly. And once it's written down, you don't have to hold it in your head anymore. More writing = clearer thinking = less total effort.

If you're not using it, check where it lives. The notebook needs to be at hand. If it migrated to a drawer, that's the problem. Move it back to where you actually spend your day.

You need one notebook, kept where you already spend your time. Not multiple notebooks organized by topic—one notebook for everything. A lab notebook with numbered pages is ideal, but any bound notebook works. Put it where you actually are during your day, not where you wish you spent time. Physical proximity matters more than you'd think.

Each day gets its own page. Write today's date at the top. Tomorrow, start a fresh page—even if today's page is mostly empty. This is how you find things later.

Bullets categorize each line as you write it. They go in the column just left of your margin line:
• **Task** something to do. Completed? Draw an X through the dot. Migrated elsewhere? Draw a > through it.
— **Note** information, a thought, not actionable
o **Event** something scheduled or time-bound
= **Timed dash** work you did, time you spent

The Jumble Bullet captures mental swirl without imposing order. For when multiple things are pulling at you with no clear sequence: make a quick scribble in one grid square (a tiny mess, one stroke), then write items horizontally separated by slashes: `journal / yoga / call mom / that email`. No hierarchy, no order—just peers, captured.

The Table of Contents makes the notebook searchable. Leave the first six pages blank. As you fill the notebook, add entries: page number, date, and a description for important pages (decisions, ideas, problems solved). Strike through each page number once it's indexed.

Flags get you back to specific pages quickly. Sticky notes mark pages you need to return to. Flag the TOC on the top edge for quick access. Flag open loops and ideas on the side edge.

Open loops get marked so you can close them later. When something needs follow-up, mark it with a double-line arrow (=>) in the outer margin and flag it. When resolved: remove the flag, strike the arrow, write the date and a page reference to where you recorded the resolution.

Ideas get planted now and harvested later—reflection is how you tend the garden. Mark ideas with a star (*) in the outer margin and flag them. Occasionally sit with your notebook and read backwards through recent pages, then scan your TOC. Notice what you've accomplished, what you're stuck on, patterns in your thinking.

Hand-Write. Think Better.

A method for people who feel overwhelmed to start simply writing more on paper—which makes everything else easier.

The Counter-Intuitive Truth

Here's what sounds wrong but turns out to be true: writing more actually creates less work. When you don't write things down, you think about the same problem multiple times. You have the same realization three different times and forget it twice. You hold everything in your head, constantly using mental energy just to remember what you're supposed to be doing. That's exhausting—and it's way more work than writing things down.

Once it's written, you don't have to hold it anymore. You can build on it instead of repeating it. You can close the loop instead of leaving it open.

What This Is (and Isn't)

This is using paper to think better—externalizing the process of figuring things out so you can actually see what you're thinking instead of just feeling overwhelmed by it. The notebook becomes a record of your thinking that you can reference, build on, and learn from.

This isn't journaling, morning pages, or a task management system. This is a method for thinking more clearly by writing things down while you're thinking them.

What Changes

You'll stop re-thinking the same things over and over. You'll close open loops—writing about something either solves it or clarifies what you actually need to do next. You'll think more clearly because writing forces you to slow down and complete thoughts. You'll have a record you can actually look up. You'll feel less overwhelmed—not because you have less to do, but because you're not holding everything in your head simultaneously.

The Book — https://craigconstantine.com/hwtb

Hand-Write. Think Better. walks you through the entire method—from getting started with your first entry, through the core practices that make the notebook genuinely useful, to living with it long-term. It's short, practical, and designed for people who feel overwhelmed and want to start simply.

Craig Constantine is a podcaster, writer, and movement practitioner who learned that the real challenge isn't having ideas—it's capturing them, developing them, and actually following through.