QUICK REFERENCE

The After-Work Toolkit

Use this section when you do not want to reread a chapter.

Five of these tools form the core sequence, in the order the book uses them: the Seven Drains show what is expensive; the 3 p.m. Checkpoint shows when capacity starts to narrow; the Workday Close reduces late-day spillover; the Landing Card manages the move from work into your own life; and the Life-Left Test judges whether the whole arrangement is sustainable. The other three support that sequence: the Minimum Viable Evening for nights when capacity is already spent, the Red-Flag Review for patterns that need evaluation, and the Script Bank for asking for what you need.

TOOL 1

The Seven Drains

Rate 0-3:

	DRAIN	0	1	2	3
1	**Attention**	☐	☐	☐	☐
2	**Executive**	☐	☐	☐	☐
3	**Social**	☐	☐	☐	☐
4	**Sensory**	☐	☐	☐	☐
5	**Emotional**	☐	☐	☐	☐
6	**Physical**	☐	☐	☐	☐
7	**Inhibition**	☐	☐	☐	☐

Top two today: _____ / _____

One 20% reduction tomorrow: _____

TOOL 2

The 3 p.m. Checkpoint

Around 3 p.m., in under two minutes:

- **Body:** eaten, water, medication or movement as planned, bathroom?
- **Brain:** still choosing tasks, or reacting?
- **Social:** how many people-facing demands are left?
- **Finish line:** what genuinely has to leave my hands today?
- **Home:** what one thing would make arrival easier?

TOOL 3

The Workday Close

Before work ends:

- capture loose tasks;
- finish only what genuinely needs today;
- write tomorrow's first action;
- leave a restart note;
- stop voluntarily creating new work;
- meet one physical need before leaving.

Restart note:

I stopped at _____. Next I will _____. The thing most likely to confuse me tomorrow is _____.

TOOL 4

The Landing Card

When I arrive home:

Phone goes: _____

If I reach for it, I want: _____

First food/drink: _____

Physical change: _____

I need most: quiet / movement / stimulation / food / contact / no decisions

Landing ends: _____

TOOL 5

The Life-Left Test

Use it across four ordinary workweeks, not after one bad day.

Does the current work arrangement usually leave enough usable capacity for:

- basic care;
- relationships;
- personal responsibilities;
- recovery;
- some non-obligatory life?

An occasional no is ordinary. Repeated no answers across most domains for weeks point to the work arrangement, not the recovery routine. Chapter 17 sets out the full test and what to do with the result.

TOOL 6

The Minimum Viable Evening

Use when capacity is already spent.

Gear tonight: green / amber / red

Dinner level: full / reduced / emergency. Decide before you leave work, not at the refrigerator.

Red evening, only:

Food: _____

Protect tomorrow: _____

Contain: _____

Wind down: _____

Pleasure: _____

TOOL 7

The Red-Flag Review

Broaden the investigation if exhaustion is:

- new;
- substantially worse;
- progressive;
- unsafe;
- present across most domains;
- associated with major sleep change;
- associated with marked mood change;
- accompanied by concerning physical symptoms;
- linked to new medication or treatment changes;
- strongly linked to hormonal transitions;
- severe enough that basic self-care is failing.

The question becomes: *What else needs assessment?*

TOOL 8

The Low-Capacity Script Bank

Partner

"I want to be available for this. I need a little transition time first. Can we talk after I eat / shower / sit for twenty minutes?"

Friend

"I still want to see you. I cannot do a big night. Want a short walk / coffee close by / a call instead?"

Family

"I am at capacity tonight. Nothing is wrong between us. I am going quiet for a bit."

Delayed reply

"I disappeared into a heavy week. I do not have the perfect reply, but I did not want the silence to keep growing."

Coworker

"Can you send the key actions in writing so I do not lose anything from the conversation?"

Manager

"I can finish A or B today at the quality we need. Which is the priority?"

Household ownership

"Can you fully own this task, including noticing when it needs to happen, rather than waiting for me to assign it?"