

Obsidian, from absolute zero

The whole setup, documented once — so you never have to reconstruct it from memory.

AT A GLANCE

WORK CAPTURE

Ctrl+Shift+N

PERSONAL CAPTURE

Ctrl+Shift+P

PLUGINS

4 installed

WEEKLY RITUAL

5 min sort

01 Vault Structure

```
vault/
├─ _inbox/           ← everything lands here first
├─ _templates/       ← Templater reads from here
├─ archive/          ← done things, never deleted
├─ personal/         ← personal captures and notes
├─ projects/
│   ├─ the-big-one/   ← whatever you're actually working on
│   └─ the-other-one/ ← there's always a second thing
└─ reference/        ← evergreen material you look up
```

The underscore on `_inbox` and `_templates` pins them to the top alphabetically. No subfolders until a folder is too full to scroll.

02 Plugins

Four plugins. The browser stays closed for 90 days.

PLUGIN	WHAT IT DOES
Templater	Kills the blank page. Every new note opens pre-structured. Template folder → <code>_templates/</code> . "Trigger on new file creation" is ON.
QuickAdd	One hotkey to capture without deciding where the note goes. Two commands: Work Capture and Personal Capture.
Dataview	Smart views that surface active projects automatically. Not configured yet — this is a 90-day problem.
Minimal Theme	Reduces visual noise. Obsidian's default UI is a sensory tax.

Do not install: Kanban, Excalidraw, Mind Map, Zettelkasten plugins, Tasks, Obsidian Projects, or anything called "second brain." Each one is a dopamine trap dressed as a productivity tool.

03 Templates

Four templates in `_templates/`. The `<% %>` blocks are Templater syntax — they resolve to real dates and titles when you create a note.

capture

```
_TEMPLATES/CAPTURE.MD

---
created: <% tp.date.now("YYYY-MM-DD HH:mm") %>
---

# <% tp.date.now("YYYY-MM-DD") %> Capture

## Brain dump

## Follow-up needed?
```

project

```
_TEMPLATES/PROJECT.MD

---
created: <% tp.date.now("YYYY-MM-DD") %>
status: active
---

# <% tp.file.title %>

## What this is
(One sentence.)

## Next action

## Notes
```

session

```
_TEMPLATES/SESSION.MD

---
created: <% tp.date.now("YYYY-MM-DD HH:mm") %>
---

# <% tp.date.now("YYYY-MM-DD") %> – <% tp.file.title %>

## What we're doing

## Decisions made

## Next action
```

reference

```
_TEMPLATES/REFERENCE.MD

---
created: <% tp.date.now("YYYY-MM-DD") %>
---

# <% tp.file.title %>

**Source:**
**Why I saved this:**

## Notes
```

04 QuickAdd Commands

Two commands configured. Both use the capture template. The only difference is where the note lands.

Work Capture — **Ctrl+Shift+N**

Template Path:	_templates/capture
File Name Format:	{{DATE:YYYY-MM-DD HHmm}} Capture
Create in folder:	_inbox/
Open on create:	ON

Personal Capture — **Ctrl+Shift+P**

Template Path:	_templates/capture
File Name Format:	{{DATE:YYYY-MM-DD HHmm}} Capture
Create in folder:	personal/
Open on create:	ON

Every note impulse goes through a hotkey. No folder decisions at the moment of capture — that's when you have the least executive function available.

05 The Weekly Sort

Pick one day. Put it on your calendar. Open `_inbox/` and `personal/` and route each note in under 5 minutes.

Active work?

projects/ – whichever
one it feeds

Look up again?

reference/

Done or stale?

archive/

Unclear?

Leave it. No
deadline.

The inbox is not a failure pile. Things can sit there for two weeks without consequence. The vault looks exactly the same whether you've been in it for three days or three weeks.

06 The Rules

- 1 No new plugins for 90 days.** The urge to optimize the system instead of using it will hollow the vault out just like every other app.
- 2 No new folder structure** until an existing folder is too full to scroll. Premature hierarchy is how vaults die.
- 3 One vault, always.** Two vaults means two inboxes, two configurations, and a routing decision every time you open Obsidian.
- 4 Don't name captures carefully.** The date-stamped filename is enough. Naming takes executive function you don't have at capture time.
- 5 Nothing gets deleted.** Unclear things get archived. Archived things can always come back.

→ What's Next

AFTER 90 DAYS OF ACTUAL USE

Home Note with Dataview

A single pinned note with Dataview queries that surface your active projects automatically — so you never have to navigate to them. The vault shows you what you're working on instead of making you remember where you put it. About 10 minutes to set up once there's real data to surface.

D'Amore

Built for one vault. Yours.

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