

# AI Brain Fry: Tips & Tricks

*Practical advice for navigating AI adoption*

When you roll out AI tools across an organization, people hit predictable walls. This guide captures the practical tips, tricks, and mindset shifts that helped 800 people push through those walls and build real capability.

## Start With What You Already Do

The biggest early win is applying AI to tasks you already perform daily. Don't start with ambitious new projects. Start with the email you were going to write anyway, the meeting notes you need to summarize, or the report you need to format.

- Draft professional emails for common tasks using Gemini or ChatGPT. Edit the output rather than writing from scratch.
- Paste meeting notes or transcriptions into an AI tool and ask for a structured summary with action items.
- Ask AI to generate an outline for an upcoming presentation before you open slides.
- Upload a spreadsheet and ask for patterns, anomalies, or a quick analysis before doing it manually.

## Learn to Compare Tools

Different AI tools have different strengths. Part of building capability is learning which tool fits which task.

- ChatGPT excels at brainstorming, content creation, code generation, and voice conversations.
- Perplexity excels at research with citations, fact-checking, and deep analysis of complex topics.
- Gemini excels at tasks integrated with Google Workspace: email drafting, document search, calendar management.
- Try the same prompt in multiple tools and compare the outputs. You'll quickly develop intuition for which tool to reach for.

## Push Past Functional Fixedness

Functional fixedness is a cognitive bias where you see a tool as only useful for one purpose. Most people hit a ceiling in the first week because they've decided what AI 'can' do. Challenge that assumption.

- If you've only used AI for text, try voice mode. Speaking to an AI often unlocks faster thinking than typing.
- If you've only used it for writing, try data analysis. Upload a CSV and ask questions about it.
- If you've only used it for individual tasks, try using it for planning: workflow audits, project scoping, or decision frameworks.
- Ask yourself: what would I do with this tool if I had no preconceptions about its limits?

## Prompting Is a Skill, Not a Secret

Better prompts produce better results. The good news is that prompting is learnable and improves quickly with practice.

- Structure your prompts with context, task, format, and constraints. 'Summarize this document' is weaker than 'Summarize this document in 3 bullet points for a finance executive who needs to make a budget decision.'
- Revisit your early prompts after a week and rewrite them. You'll see immediate improvement.
- Use Deep Research mode for complex, multi-faceted questions. It synthesizes across sources rather than giving a single answer.
- When the output isn't right, refine the prompt rather than starting over. AI conversations are iterative by design.

## Handle AI Mistakes With Judgment, Not Fear

AI tools make errors. They hallucinate facts, produce biased outputs, and sometimes confidently give wrong answers. This is normal and manageable.

- Treat AI output as a first draft, not a final answer. Your judgment is the quality filter.

- When something doesn't look right, ask the AI to explain its reasoning. Often the error becomes obvious.
- Cross-check important facts with a second tool or a primary source. AI is faster than manual research but not infallible.
- The goal is not to blindly trust AI. The goal is to use it as a force multiplier for your own expertise.

## Use Voice Mode for Thinking, Not Just Typing

Voice conversations with AI are underused but powerful. Speaking forces you to articulate your thinking in real time, and the AI can push back, ask follow-ups, and help you refine ideas faster than typing allows.

- Use voice mode for brainstorming when you have a vague idea you need to sharpen.
- Use it for learning: have a conversation about a topic you want to understand better.
- Review the transcript afterward to capture key insights you said out loud but might have forgotten.

## Build Habits, Not Just Skills

The teams that got the most from AI weren't the ones with the best prompts. They were the ones who built AI into their daily routine.

- Dedicate 15 minutes a day to experimenting with one new use case. Small daily reps compound faster than weekly deep dives.
- Share what you learn with your team. Visible participation creates a flywheel that pulls in even the skeptics.
- Audit your own workflow: where do you spend the most time on repetitive tasks? That's where AI has the highest ROI.
- The shift isn't about becoming an AI expert. It's about becoming someone who naturally reaches for AI when it's the right tool for the job.