Our Must-Have, Most-Used
Productivity Apps

THE SWEET SETUP

Who wants just any productivity app?

Not us. We want the best! And so do you!

Alas, it's getting harder and harder to find the best apps. You can't trust the search results on the App store to show you what is actually great. And Googling for something often leads you to just a list of a bunch of apps that you still have to sort through.

That's why we spend an inordinate amount of time and energy to research, test, and find the very best apps for you.

The Best Email App

Spark

Why we love it

Spark is our favorite email app for the Mac because it has a great combination of powerful features and a clean, well-designed user interface. It's a great productivity tool for individual users, and also offers some innovative features for teams that need to collaborate on emails together.

Pro Tip for Spark Users

Spark integrates directly with several of our other, favorite productivity apps like Things and Bear. Use Spark to more easily send your incoming email messages directly to your to-do list manager.

Did you Know?

Spark has the ability to send messages later, set follow-up reminders, snooze an email message for later, and set customizable keyboard shortcuts (so you can just click a button to use the standard set from Gmail or even Apple Mail if you prefer).

Read our full review of Spark »

The Best Productivity App
Things

Why we love it

Things is one of the most pleasing and satisfying pieces of software we've ever used. It's easy to get stuff into it with customizable quick entry shortcuts. One of the aspects of Things that has always been important is how it structures the tasks that make up your life using GTD's Areas of Responsibility. So if you're at work and don't care to see your chores around the house, you can view a specific area with all its contained projects and miscellaneous tasks.

Pro Tip for Things Users

Things has an extensive URL-scheme on iOS, making it possible to link all sorts of apps with Things to send tasks to your inbox from anywhere. Matthew Cassinelli has created an extensive guide to Things's URL scheme (you can [check it out here](#)) and one of the best uses of that URL scheme is Shortcuts (formerly Workflow). Using Shortcuts, you can create quick shortcuts for sending new tasks to Things or to quickly open up a specific area in Things. Shortcuts makes [crazy shortcuts like this one possible](#), where you can take meeting minutes inside Bear and then automatically create tasks based on the meeting's actionable items inside Things, complete with URLs linking the two apps.

Did you Know?

You can email tasks to your Things inbox? Once enabled, you're given a unique email address any email you send to that address will be converted into a task and will be added to your Things inbox across all your devices. As expected, the subject line of the email becomes the task's name and any text within the body of the email becomes the task's note.

[Read our full review of Things 3 »](#)

The Best Habit-Tracking App

Productive

Why we love it

Productive offers the right blend of powerful features and ease of use that makes it the ideal tool to help you establish positive habits. It's built around a philosophy of creating positive change by repeatedly doing the right things.

Pro Tip

If you **really** want to make something a habit, Productive has a feature called *Boost Mode* that will set reminders for every half hour. You can only boost one habit at a time, but it can be nice if you need a big push to get started with a particular habit.

Did you Know?

According to research at Scranton University, 92% of New Year's resolutions will fail. But in his book Atomic Habits, author James Clear tells us why:

> *"You do not rise to the level of your goals. You fall to the level of your systems."*

Read our full review of Productive »

The Best Pomodoro App

Be Focused Pro

Why we love it

It has a simple and clean user interface that provides easy access to your timers and provides enough additional features without creating clutter that give it enough power to fit just about any workflow.

Pro Tip

The pro version allows you to export your data as a CSV file. This can be useful if you want to include this data along with other information in a spreadsheet. Get a more complete picture of what sort of tasks you are completing and where you are struggling.

Did you Know?

The word "pomodoro" is actually the Italian word for tomato, which is appropriate once you know that (according to Wikipedia) the pomodoro method (or pomodoro technique) was invented by Francesco Cirillo (an Italian) in the 1980s.

Read our full review of Be Focused Pro »

The Best Mind Mapping App

MindNode 5

Why we love it

There are many very good options for mind mapping software to help you capture and organize your ideas, but we think that MindNode is the best for most people because it has a beautiful design, is easy to use, supports very reliable iCloud sync, and there are just enough import/export options to be a really useful tool in almost any workflow.

Pro Tip

For those using Ulysses, you can export your mind map to markdown, then continuing writing. Helpful when outlining concepts in MindNode then moving to the writing stage.

Did you Know?

MindNode 5 has a built in feature called "MyMindNode" which uploads your mind map to the MyMindNode service and creates a unique URL that allows you to open the mind map in a browser.

Read our full review of MindNode 5 »

Life is too short for crappy apps.

At The Sweet Setup our aim is to help you make the most of your time and attention — both on and *off* your devices...

Every day we publish articles, reviews, tutorials, and guides to help you be more productive and focused.

We've been doing this since 2013. That's why we're trusted by half-a-million website readers every month, tens of thousands of readers on our newsletter, and our work has been referenced by *The New York Times*, *Inc.*, *Forbes*, *Entrepreneur*, *MacStories*, and others.

We also have several products that have helped thousands of iPad, iPhone, and Mac users just like you to become overnight experts in the apps they rely on most.

You can get access to all of our in-depth training courses right here:

thesweetsetup.com/training