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The 40-Minute Inbox Setup

Claude

Seven steps. About 40 minutes start to finish. You can stop after any one of them and still be better off than you were.

What you need: a Claude account. The Gmail, Calendar and Drive connectors are available on every plan, including Free. On a Team or Enterprise plan an owner has to enable connectors before you can, so check that first if you are not the account owner.

Step 1. Show it your writing instead of describing it

Nobody can describe how they write. Everybody can paste five emails. Open your sent folder, take five things you actually sent, and ask for this:

```
Here are five emails I actually sent. Extract the rules of how I write:
typical sentence length, the words I reach for, my style and tone, the
words I never use, how I open, and how I close. Give me the rules, not a
summary of the emails.
```

Keep what it gives you back. That is your voice written down. Do not file it away in a note somewhere: in step 5 you turn it into a Skill, and then you never paste any of this again.

Step 2. Connect it to where your mail already lives

Where to click:

1. Click your name or initials, bottom left, then **Settings**
2. Select **Connectors**
3. Find **Gmail**, **Google Calendar** or **Google Drive** and click **Connect**
4. Sign in to Google in the window that opens and approve the access it asks for

Connect whichever ones you actually keep your work in. Authenticate once and you are done.

After that it reads the real file or email when a question calls for it. No pasting, no stale copy, and no argument about which version somebody used. You do not have to tell it which connector to use either: ask a question that needs your mail or your files and it works that out by itself.

It asks your approval before it sends, replies to or forwards anything, so connecting it does not hand it your outbox.

One thing worth understanding before you click through: Claude inherits the access you already have in external systems like Google Drive. It cannot see anything you cannot see. Check what your own access actually covers, because that is exactly what you are handing over.

There is also a rule worth learning now, because it saves you a lot of wasted effort later. Use a connector whenever one exists. Use browser control only for sites that offer nothing else. A connector returns structured data and keeps working when somebody redesigns a page. Browser control does neither. Browser control = Claude in Chrome.

Step 3. Clear the backlog

This is the first real win and it costs you about a minute. Paste this into a Claude chat.

```
Triage my email inbox for me and split the emails into needs a reply
from me, information only, and already handled. For each one in the
first group, give me the deadline and the one sentence I need to answer.
(OPTIONAL) Archive all informational and already handled emails. If you
can not prove through another connected source that a task is handled,
then mark it as needs a reply from me.
```

The second and third groups are the point. Most of what feels like a backlog is neither.

Step 4. Brief it properly for anything new

A vague assignment gets vague work back, for the same reason it would from a new starter.

When you task Claude, give it five things:

1. The role it is playing
2. The goal
3. The specific task
4. The context it needs
5. What it must not do

Then add the line that saves you every time:

```
Show me the plan first.
```

You read the plan, you correct anything that was wrong, and only then does it do the work. That line has saved me more rework than everything else in this document put together.

Step 5. Turn the job you repeat into a Skill

Where to click:

1. Click your name or initials, bottom left, then **Settings**
2. Select **Customize**, then **Skills**
3. Click **Add**

4. Give it a name, a description of when it should be used, and the instructions

Skills work on every plan, Free included, as long as code execution is switched on for your account.

If you paste the same prompt before every weekly summary, report, or repeated task, that is a Skill waiting to happen. Write the role, the rules and the output format once, then save it with a name and a description of when it should be used.

Start with the one from step 1. Call it *Email voice*, paste in the rules Claude extracted from your five sent emails, and describe it as: *use whenever I am drafting or replying to an email.* From then on your voice is applied to every draft without you asking, in any chat, on any device. That is the single highest-value Skill most people will ever make, and it takes two minutes now that step 1 has done the hard part.

The description is the part that matters, and it is the part people rush. Claude reads the description to decide whether to load the Skill at all, so it has to describe the situation rather than the task. You never invoke a Skill by hand. A vague description means it simply never fires, and you will assume the feature is broken when the description was the problem.

Step 6. Let it watch things while you sleep

Where to click:

1. Open **Cowork**
2. Describe the job and when it should run, in plain English
3. Confirm the schedule when Claude shows it back to you

Set a scheduled routine for the checks you would never remember to do. Watching what your competitors published is the obvious one:

```
Search for anything published about [three companies] in the last 24
hours. Return the outlet, the date and the URL for each. If there is
nothing, say so rather than padding.
```

Daily is the right cadence for this. Remote routines run on a minimum interval of one hour, which is far more frequent than this job ever needs.

Step 7. The rule that keeps you out of trouble

Read this one before you put anything on a schedule.

Nothing runs unattended until it has been tested against three different weeks of real data. Working once is not the same as working reliably, and a schedule assumes reliably.

If it invents anything, or silently drops anything, even once, it stays manual. That is a correct outcome and not a failure of the idea. The whole point of testing three weeks is to find that out before it matters.

All three weeks correct, or correctly flagging what is missing, and you can schedule it. Anything less and you keep your hand on it.

What to do now

Do step 1 today. It takes ten minutes and every other step reads better because of it.

If you get stuck on any of them, post in the community and I will walk you through it.

Community: skool.com/stephenai-8919

SOURCES

Everything here is documented behaviour, not a workaround.

- Custom Skills: https://support.claude.com/en/articles/12512198-how-to-create-custom-skills
- Google Workspace connectors: https://support.claude.com/en/articles/10166901-use-google-workspace-connectors
- Personalisation: https://support.claude.com/en/articles/10185728-understanding-claude-s-personalization-features
- Scheduled tasks: https://support.claude.com/en/articles/13854387-schedule-recurring-tasks-in-claude-cowork