

AI prompts to (safely) lighten the mental load

Introduction

The [Australian Institute of Family Studies](#) found that over 74% of women felt stressed balancing work and family commitments, and that in households with children, women carry the mental load 78% most of the time.

Imagine if AI could lift even part of that mental load? This guide suggests some simple ways that AI can help with the daily juggle of modern life.

Safety reminders

- Never include personal or sensitive information.
If you wouldn't say it on speakerphone in a cafe, don't type it into AI.
- Always verify any response before relying on it.
Think of AI like a work experience kid. Hopefully it will do a great job, but you'll definitely want to check the results before relying on it.
- Don't upload business and creative ideas you wouldn't want shared in other answers. Be mindful of what you upload - your art, your writing, your photos.
If it's yours, and you want credit for it - don't feed it into AI.
- Guard your emotional boundaries. AI can lighten the mental load, but it is not a therapist.
AI can sound friendly - but it is not your friend.
- Hold onto the thinking power. AI can sound confident - even when it's wrong.
AI is a decision tool, not a decision maker.

The basics of prompting

While AI can't "think" like a human, it is trained to reply to conversational instructions called "prompts".

Like people, the better instructions you give an AI tool - the better the result. So a prompt like "Summarise this document" will likely get a vague response. You will get a better outcome with a more specific prompt.

Think about the **Who, Why, What** and **How**:

Who: give the AI a persona. *You are an expert engineer.*

Why: describe why you need help. *I have been asked to speak at a conference on [topic]*

What: describe in detail what you want the AI to do. *Review this document and provide me a 2 page summary of the key points made about [topic].*

How: describe how you want the response to be presented. *The summary should be written at year 8 reading level, aimed at a non-technical audience.*

This will help you generate a much more useful result.

30 AI prompts to lighten the mental load

The prompts listed here are a general guide only - you can refine them to suit your needs.

Meal planning

1. Solving the last minute “what’s for dinner” panic
Here’s what I have in my fridge and pantry [list items]. Give me 3 meal ideas for things I can cook in 30 minutes or less with the ingredients listed here.

After you’ve picked an idea:
Give me the recipe and step by step instructions to make [option 1]
2. Helping to plan a family event
You are an event planner. I am hosting Christmas dinner and my mum wants a traditional roast dinner, my sister is gluten free, my brother is a vegetarian and my kids hate mince pies. Suggest a menu that will keep everyone happy that takes no more than 2 hours to prepare.
3. Menu inspiration
You are a chef. I have decided to try “Meat Free Mondays”. Give me 10 recipe ideas for tasty vegetarian meals I can prepare in 30 minutes or less. I like [list specific foods you like] and dislike/am allergic to [list]

Productivity

1. Time saving summaries
Act like an expert in [field]. I’ll paste key sections from a public research report. Summarise the key points related to [topic] in no more than 2 pages and note which section each point came from.
2. Task management [non confidential information only]
Act like my executive assistant. I’ll paste the text from several emails. Create a list of key actions, owners and deadlines.
3. A new perspective when you have a lot on your plate
Act like a productivity coach. I feel overwhelmed by everything I need to do. Ask me 5 gentle questions to help me get clear on what actually matters most this week.

General Organisation

1. Tame the to do list.
Here is my to-do list. Sort it into three columns - urgent, important and can wait.
2. Keeping on top of things
Help me plan my week. I work [x days], have family or personal commitments on [days], and need time for exercise, rest, and errands. Build a simple, realistic

weekly schedule that feels achievable. Please include time buffers between commitments to make it realistic.

3. Decluttering
Help me design a 10-minute weekly ritual to help declutter my house - something realistic I can actually stick to.

Shopping and gift giving

1. Cost savings
Type in your usual weekly shopping list.
Review this shopping list. Based on publicly available information, compare ALDI, Coles, Woolworths and IGA prices for these items. Which generally offers lower prices on items on my list? Summarise typical price ranges and savings strategies.
2. Gift buying
Give me 5 gift ideas under \$30 for a [7 year old girl] who likes [list interests].
3. Consumer research
Please act as an expert researcher. Compare 5 popular [hybrid cars | slow cookers | baby seats] under [\$ budget]. Use Australian reviews. Summarise pros, cons and selection factors.

Self Care

1. Stress management
I am feeling overwhelmed. Write me a one-minute calming script I can read to help me calm down.
2. Reflection
Act like a health and wellness coach. I am struggling with procrastination lately and not sure why. Suggest some journal prompts to help me figure this out.
3. Positive reset when stuck
I have 10 minutes between tasks and feel drained. Suggest three small things I could do right now to feel more energised without caffeine

Health and Wellness

1. Exercise plan
*Act like a kind personal trainer. I am returning to exercise after a break. Create a gentle 4 week plan I can do at home, starting with 15 minutes a day.
(Remember to consult your doctor about any exercise plan as well).*
2. Weight loss coach
Provide healthy lifestyle ideas to support gradual, sustainable weight management for a [x year old woman/man]. Include balanced meal examples and general

principles - not a strict diet

3. Time poor fitness
I only have 10 minutes today. Suggest a mini-workout I can do in my living room — no jumping, low impact, but still effective.

Parenting

1. When the kids are climbing the walls
Give me 5 ideas for rainy day activities for 5-8 year olds that don't involve screens or glitter
2. Parenting coach
Act like a calm parenting coach. My [8 year old/teenager] keeps arguing about [topic]. Give me three short scripts I can use to set boundaries calmly and keep the connection strong.
3. Homework help
My child is in Year 5 and finding fractions confusing. Help me explain them simply, and give me two practice problems we can do with food. Keep them fun and confidence-building.

Relationships

1. Friendships
Suggest 5 supportive messages I can send to a friend who is having a difficult time.
2. Significant other
Help me prepare to talk with my partner about [topic]. Give me three short ways to start the conversation calmly, one neutral sentence I could use if it gets tense, and one idea for ending the talk positively even if we disagree.
3. Setting boundaries
Help me write a short email to a colleague who has asked for my help but I am too busy to help out.

Travel

1. Travel ideas
Give me six affordable three-day getaways within a 3 hour drive of Wollongong for the October long weekend. Not too expensive, suggest a mix of coast, nature and good food.
2. Flight searches
I want to fly between Sydney and Bali. Suggest strategies or best times of the year to find low cost flights. Include tips for using comparison sites.

3. Packing checklist

Make me a packing checklist for [a family of four] for a [7 day] trip to [Melbourne] in [April based on average weather at that time of year. Include things that people often forget.

Finances

Remember: never upload confidential information

1. Budget motivation

My mortgage balance is [\$750,000] at [5.39% pa] and we currently repay \$4,200 per month with 24 years remaining. Show me how much interest I would save if I could increase my repayments by a range of different increments each month. Assume repayments are monthly and interest compounds monthly.

2. Budget helper

Here's a list of monthly expenses (amounts and categories). Show me what percentage of our budget goes to each category and 3 ways to save about \$250 per month.

3. Financial declutter

Help me make a checklist to tidy up my finances - things like subscriptions, insurance renewals, superannuation, and forgotten accounts. Rank them in order of impact.

Bonus Tip

AI can make mistakes.

If you are using an AI tool to research something, and you want to avoid the AI tool making things up ("hallucinating") to seem to be helpful, you can ask it not to. For example, after a prompt asking an AI tool to perform a research task you could add:

Do not make things up. Provide citations and page numbers (and links to primary sources where available) for all information provided in your response. If you don't know the answer - say so.

Always check the answer and the citations - even when you have used this prompt.