"What is Trello and how can it help me?"
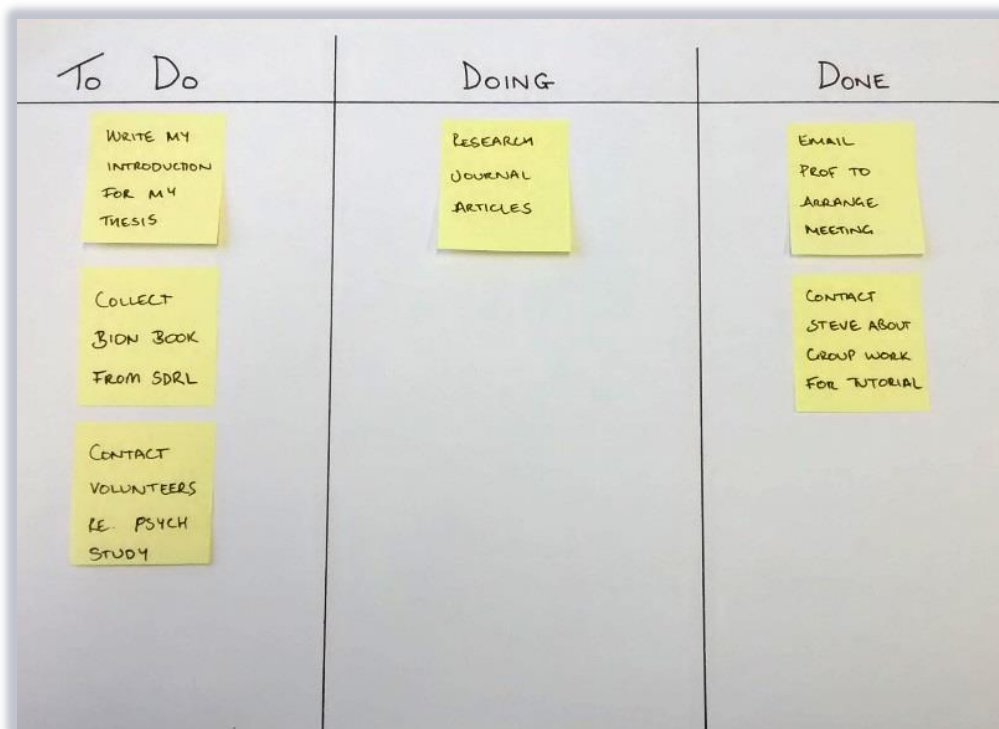
Trello is a task management tool that can help you manage to-do lists, projects, University work and general tasks, both for personal use and as a collaborative tool. Simplistically, it allows you to create 'boards', on which you create 'lists' that in turn can be populated by cards. A good way to understand it, is to firstly understand the 'style' of task management it suits.

The Tech-Free Method

Consider the following:

This is a simple board that helps you track what you need to do, what you're actively committed to working on right now, and what you have achieved. You should try this out yourself:

1. Get a large piece of paper (a whiteboard is ideal), some pens and some sticky notes.
2. Draw three columns titled: To Do, Doing, Done.
3. Think about everything you need to do and write each task onto its own sticky note. Note: try to break down broad tasks into sensible chunks
   e.g.   'Write Essay'
   becomes…
   'Brainstorm Essay', 'Research Essay', Plan Essay, Draft Essay etc.
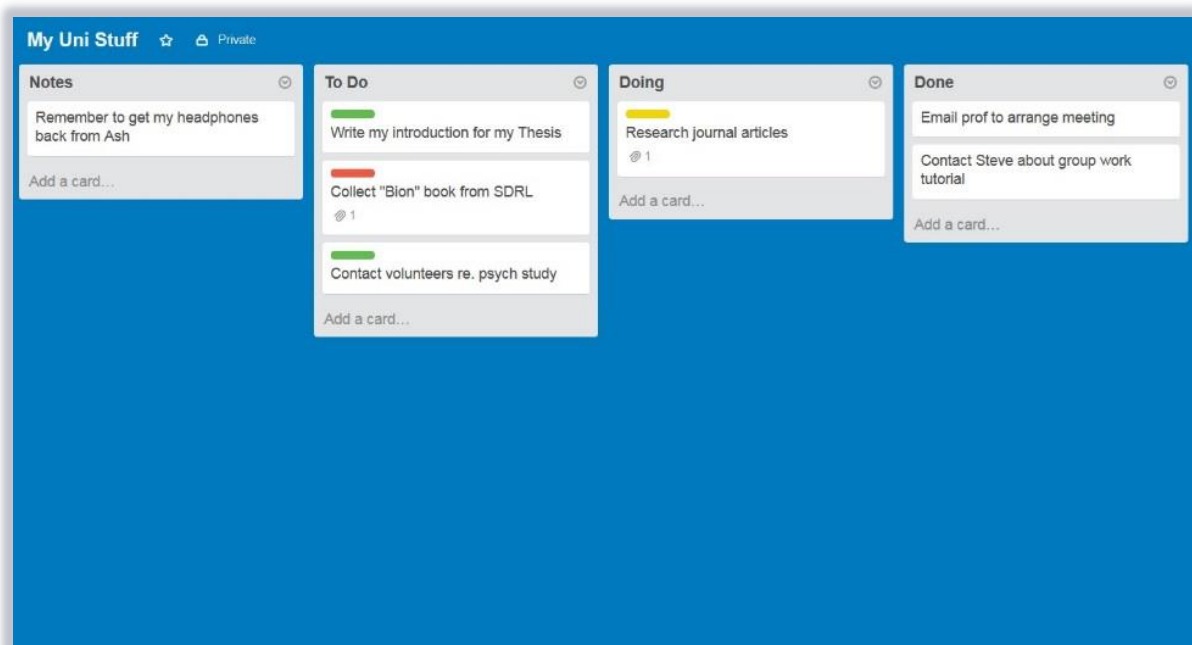4. Add your sticky tasks onto the To Do column.

5. Then each day, choose a realistically achievable set of tasks in your 'To Do' column and move them to 'Doing'.
6. At the end of the day you can judge what you've achieved: move completed items to 'Done' and any you haven't managed, move back to 'To Do', or leave it in Doing for tomorrow.

This is an incredibly simple system, but the simplicity is its strength. Some people find that having these clear visual cues is enough to help them feel in control of their work. Remember: The right organisation strategy for you is the one you actually stick to!

Trello works in a similar way to this manual system but adds a host of digital functionality that you may find useful.

Trello

In Trello you can create Boards (your sheet of paper) and in those boards you can create Lists (your columns) and then you can populate those lists with Cards (sticky notes):

When you get set up with an account[1], you can go ahead and try the same steps you followed for the manual method above. Here's some of the key concepts you'll find in Trello:

Boards

Boards allow you to create multiple projects or topics for your tasks. For example, you might have one for your Psychology course, one for your Economics course and one for your long term, world-domination plans. Inside each board you can create as many lists and cards as you like. You can share cards between different boards, so some people like to make a board for each project and have a single 'master' board to keep track of the big picture.

Lists

Lists are… just lists really. You add and move cards into and between them. How you use your lists is up to you but the idea of having a process, like with 'To Do', 'Doing and 'Done', can be very powerful for helping you with your personal [workflows](#).

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[1] You can now use your University Microsoft Office 365 account ending @abdn.ac.uk for University work.

Cards

Cards are the building blocks of Trello. Each one can represent anything from things you want to do achieve to things you need to buy from the shop. Every card can have sub-components added to them like checklists, images, attachments, deadline dates, coloured labels, and text notes.

Trello combines the tried and tested strategy of making lists, with a powerful visual style and genuinely useful functionality. It's one of those tools that manages to balance a simple, elegant user interface with powerful, flexible features.

The best way to get started with Trello is to have a look at their online Tour.

You can download from Google Play, the Apple App Store or go directly to the website: www.trello.com