

Installing and Using the Practical Project Planning Skills

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Download one ZIP file, upload it to Claude, turn it on, then name a skill in your request: "Using the AAA skill, suggest the steps needed to resolve this problem." The 11 skills come from *A Field Guide to Practical Project Planning* by John Newcomb, "The Biker Project Manager."

Before you start

Pick the download that matches your Claude plan, and turn on code execution. Skills will not run without it.

Your Claude plan	Download	Install with
Pro, Max, Team, or Enterprise	practical-project-planning-plugin.zip	Option A: one upload installs all 11 skills
Free	practical-project-planning-individual-skills.zip	Option B: upload the skills one at a time
Any plan, using Claude Code in a terminal	Either ZIP	Option C

Turn on code execution. On Free, Pro, and Max, go to **Settings > Capabilities** and turn on **Code execution and file creation**. On Team and Enterprise, an organization Owner turns on code execution and **Skills** under **Organization settings > Plugins & skills**. If you do not see the upload options described below, ask your Owner.

Save the ZIP somewhere easy to find, such as your Downloads folder. Do not open or change the plugin ZIP: Claude reads it exactly as it is.

Option A: Install the plugin (Pro, Max, Team, Enterprise)

One upload adds all 11 skills to your account.

1. Download **practical-project-planning-plugin.zip**.

2. Open Claude on the web at claude.ai, or the Claude desktop app.
3. Open **Customize** in the left sidebar, then the **Plugins** tab.
4. Select **Add**, then **Upload plugin**.
5. Choose `practical-project-planning-plugin.zip`. Claude reminds you to install only plugins you trust; confirm to continue.
6. Open **Practical Project Planning** in your plugin list and turn its toggle on.

The plugin is saved to your Claude account. It also appears in Claude Code when you sign in to Claude Code with the same account. In the plugin, each skill's full name starts with `practical-project-planning:`, for example `practical-project-planning:aaa-method`. You never need to type that prefix; "the AAA skill" works.

Option B: Install individual skills (any plan, including Free)

Upload each skill as its own ZIP. Install all 11, or only the ones you want.

1. Download `practical-project-planning-individual-skills.zip`.
2. Unzip it once. You get a folder named `skills` holding 11 ZIP files, such as `aaa-method.zip` and `wbs.zip`. Leave those 11 files zipped.
3. In Claude, open **Customize**, then **Skills**.
4. Select the **+** button, then **+ Create skill**, then **Upload a skill**.
5. Choose one skill ZIP, for example `aaa-method.zip`.
6. Turn the new skill's toggle on.
7. Repeat steps 4 to 6 for each skill you want.

Start with `aaa-method` if you install only one. The other skills point to each other by name, so they work best installed together.

Option C: Claude Code

If you installed the plugin with Option A, sign in to Claude Code with the same account and the skills are already there. To install the skills straight into Claude Code instead:

1. Unzip `practical-project-planning-plugin.zip`.
2. Copy each folder inside its `skills` folder into `~/.claude/skills/` on your computer, so you end up with files such as `~/.claude/skills/aaa-method/SKILL.md`.
3. Start `claude` in any project.

4. Describe a problem and name a skill, or run a skill directly with a slash command such as `/aaa-method` or `/red-zone-planning`.

```
unzip practical-project-planning-plugin.zip -d practical-project-planning
mkdir -p ~/.claude/skills
cp -R practical-project-planning/skills/* ~/.claude/skills/
```

How to ask

Describe the situation, name the skill, and say whether you want a to-do list or the problem worked for you.

Using the **[skill name]** skill, **[what you want]** for this situation: **[the facts]**.

Example: *"Using the AAA skill, suggest the steps needed to resolve this problem. Our data migration vendor just told us their lead engineer is out for three weeks, and cutover is in five weeks."*

Every skill follows the same rules, so the answers look familiar from one skill to the next:

- **Two modes.** Ask "what should I do" and you get an ordered to-do list for you. Ask Claude to "solve it" and it also does every step it can right now: drafting the risk register, the runbook, the sponsor email, or the WBS table.
- **Owners on every step.** Each step is tagged **[You]**, a role such as **[Tech Lead]**, or **[Claude]** when Claude can produce it immediately. Each step has one owner, one output, and a done-when.
- **No stalling on missing facts.** Claude marks guesses as **[assumed]** and keeps going, then asks at most three questions, only ones whose answers would change the plan.
- **Sized to the problem.** A quick question gets a short answer; a program-level plan gets full tables.
- **Skills hand off.** If your problem really belongs to another skill, Claude says which one and applies it.

The more real detail you give (dates, team size, vendors, budget, what has been tried), the fewer assumptions Claude has to make. Answer its questions and ask it to update the plan.

The 11 skills

Start with the AAA skill for any problem; it routes to the others. Chapter references are to *A Field Guide to Practical Project Planning*.

Skill	Use it when	Try asking	You get
aaa-method (Ch. 2)	Any problem, blocker, or decision you need to move	"Using the AAA skill, what steps resolve this: our sponsor left and the project has stalled."	Assess (know, don't know, "Can we start now?", risks, flashpoints), an Assemble table, an Action register, and a re-assess checkpoint
risk-triage (Ch. 2)	You need to score risks, decide on a mitigation spend, or size a reserve	"Using the risk skill, analyze these risks for our ERP go-live."	A risk register with Accept / Mitigate / Eliminate calls, the cost math, a reserve plan, and approach changes
stakeholder-communication (Ch. 2)	You need a status report, sponsor email, escalation, or steering committee decision ask	"Using the stakeholder communication skill, turn these notes into an executive status for a CFO."	An audience profile, a message plan, a ready-to-send draft, and follow-ups
four-stage-planning (Ch. 3, 6)	You are planning a project end to end, or checking where planning stands	"Using the four-stage planning skill, plan a 6-month CRM rollout with one vendor."	A planning roadmap by stage, gate review results, feedback-loop changes, and the next step
stage1-themes-objectives (Ch. 3)	Goals are vague, or sponsors disagree on what success means	"Using the Stage 1 skill, turn this charter into themes and measurable objectives."	A Themes and Objectives table, a flashpoint log, and alignment issues

Skill	Use it when	Try asking	You get
stage2-tasking-schedule (Ch. 3)	You need tasks, dependencies, estimates, and a schedule the team believes	"Using the Stage 2 skill, break these objectives into a task register and schedule."	A task register, dependency map, internal schedule, and a Stage 2 workshop kit
stage3-provider-alignment (Ch. 3)	A vendor or contractor must deliver part of the plan	"Using the Stage 3 skill, prepare our plan review with the integration vendor."	A provider alignment matrix, plan changes, SOW gaps, and inputs for the spend schedule
stage4-spend-schedule (Ch. 3)	You need a time-phased budget or need to know when invoices will hit	"Using the Stage 4 skill, build a monthly spend schedule from these milestones and rates."	A spend schedule, budget baseline, contingency reserve plan, and red flags
wbs (Ch. 4, App. C)	You need to break work down, or check a WBS before baselining	"Using the WBS skill, review my WBS and tell me what is missing."	A numbered Theme, Objective, Task WBS and a 14-point quality checklist with fixes
red-zone-planning (Ch. 5)	A go-live, cutover, or major release is 2 to 6 weeks out	"Using the red zone skill, get us ready for a Saturday night database cutover."	A readiness gap list, runbook, go-live checklist, rollback plan, smoke tests, comms plan, command structure, and a readiness call
planning-health-check (Ch. 6)	A project is off track and you need to find out why	"Using the health check skill, diagnose why this project keeps missing dates."	A Green / Amber / Red scorecard, ranked root causes, and a recovery plan for this week, the next 2 to 4 weeks, and beyond

Troubleshooting and updates

Problem	Fix
No upload option under Customize	Turn on Code execution and file creation in Settings > Capabilities. On Team or Enterprise, ask your Owner to allow Skills. Plugin upload needs a paid plan; on Free, use Option B.
Upload of an individual skill fails	Upload one of the 11 inner ZIPs (such as <code>aaa-method.zip</code>), not the outer download. Do not re-zip a skill yourself: each ZIP must contain the skill's folder, with <code>SKILL.md</code> inside it.
Claude answers without using the skill	Check that the skill's toggle is on, then name the skill in your request: "Using the WBS skill..."
The answer rests on too many [assumed] items	Give real dates, team size, vendors, and budget, then ask Claude to redo the plan.
You want a file, not just a reply	Ask for it: "put the risk register in a spreadsheet" or "make the runbook a document."

Updating to a new version. Download the new ZIP from thebikerprojectmanager.com. Remove the old plugin or skills in **Customize** (open the item, then remove or uninstall it), then install the new version using the same steps.

A note on trust. Uploaded plugins and skills are not reviewed by Anthropic. Everything these skills tell Claude to do is printed in full in the companion document, *Practical Project Planning: Claude Skills Pack*, so you can read it before you install.

Questions: john@thebikerprojectmanager.com. Copyright 2026 John Newcomb.