

The Mental Models Starter Kit Cheatsheet

(Formatted as a clean, one-page reference guide. You can use icons for each model.)

The Mental Models Starter Kit

Your Quick Reference Guide to Thinking Better from onlyyouos.com

What is a Mental Model? A simple framework in your mind that helps you understand how the world works, enabling you to solve problems and make decisions more effectively.

Core Thinking Frameworks

1. First-Principles Thinking

Break a problem down into its most basic, fundamental truths and reason up from there, rather than relying on analogies or convention.

2. Inversion

Instead of thinking about how to achieve success, think about how to guarantee failure—and then simply avoid those things.

3. Second-Order Thinking

Go beyond the immediate result of a decision and ask, "And then what?" to understand the long-term consequences.

4. Circle of Competence

Honestly define the areas where you have deep expertise and make your biggest decisions within those boundaries.

Productivity & Decision-Making Models

5. The 80/20 Rule (Pareto Principle)

Recognize that roughly 80% of your results will come from just 20% of your efforts—then focus relentlessly on that 20%.

6. The Eisenhower Matrix

Prioritize tasks by categorizing them based on urgency and importance, helping you focus on what's truly valuable, not just what's immediate.

7. Occam's Razor

When faced with competing explanations, the simplest one—the one with the fewest assumptions—is usually the correct one.

Understanding Biases & Human Nature

8. Confirmation Bias

The tendency to search for, interpret, and recall information in a way that confirms your pre-existing beliefs.

9. Survivorship Bias

The error of concentrating on the people or things that "survived" a process while overlooking those that did not, leading to overly optimistic beliefs.

10. Hanlon's Razor

Never attribute to malice that which can be adequately explained by carelessness or incompetence.

11. The Sunk Cost Fallacy

The tendency to continue an endeavor if an investment in money, effort, or time has already been made, even if the current costs outweigh the expected benefits.

12. Anchoring Bias

The tendency to rely too heavily on the first piece of information offered (the "anchor") when making decisions.

For a deeper dive into each model, visit onlyyouos.com
