



The Safe Hands Checklist for Using GenAI Without Losing Your Mind

Rule 1: You will always, always, always have to audit the output an AI tool gives you.

Rule 2: If you don't understand a task well enough to audit the AI's output, you should not be giving that task to a machine. Stay in your lane!

First steps

- [] **Triage:** How important is the output? Is it small and personal, or is it mission-critical business-related? *(This affects what you do with the output: skim it and use it, or interrogate it.)*
- [] **Minimise:** Have I reduced this task down to the bare minimum I need? *(Ask for an outline; not the whole article. Or for three questions important to the problem you are trying to solve; not the entire solution).*
- [] **Manage the process:** Be in charge. Think through the problem before starting – what are my ideas about this, what do I actually want, in what format. What don't I want? *(Note – you don't need to do this to get a recipe for supper; you do need to do it to generate a content strategy for a business.)*
- [] **Privacy:** Does what I am about to enter into the AI tool contain PII (Personally Identifiable Information) or trade secrets? *(If so, take them out.)*

The human-in-the-loop audit

- [] **Verification:** Have I checked the "facts" the AI provided? If I can't, is there someone I can ask?
- [] **Tone check:** Is this "[workslop](#)" or does it have my own human voice? *(Try reading it aloud!)*
- [] **Bias check:** Does the output rely on stereotypes? Does it work for my audience (who might, for instance, be second-language English speakers)?
- [] **Extend thinking:** Can I push the AI to do better? *(Ask it to combine ideas in "extreme" ways or adopt specific personas to unlock creative sparks.)*

Optional: Professional growth checks

- [] **Tutor vs ghostwriter:** Am I using the AI tool to help me *understand* the subject, or just to *finish* the task?
- [] **Manual mastery:** Could I do this task without generative AI? If not, should I learn how to do it?
- [] **Time allocation:** How will I use the 15 minutes I just saved? (e.g., reading a book, a 5-minute walk, or a deep-focus planning session).
- [] **New skill:** Did I learn one thing this week the old-fashioned way (no AI assistance)?