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How to learn AI in 3 steps (no course, no code)

The reskilling headlines are everywhere and none of them tell you how. Here is the practical version: three steps that take you from never-used-it to the person your workplace asks about AI.

who it's for

complete beginner

time needed

3 weeks

cost

free

a free guide

Every few weeks there's another headline about AI and jobs. The word is always "reskill", and the article never tells you how. A course? A cert? Back to college at 40? Nobody says.

Here's the version I'd give a friend. It costs nothing, it doesn't involve a classroom, and it works because it's built on your actual job, not somebody's curriculum. Three steps.

Step 1: use it on real work, every day

Skip the tutorials. The people who are good at this didn't watch videos about AI, they used it on Tuesday's actual to-do list.

Pick one real task every day for a week and do it with Claude instead of alone. Reply to that awkward email. Summarise the meeting notes. Plan the week's dinners. Draft the thing you've been putting off. Small is fine, real is the rule.

If you haven't set Claude up yet, start with your first afternoon: memory, connectors and your first Project, all on the free plan.

If you want a head start, paste this in:

```
You are my AI upskilling coach. My job is [your job], and my week is mostly [the 3 or 4 tasks you spend the most time on].
```

- ```
1. List which of those tasks AI can already help with today, ranked by time saved.
2. For the top one, walk me through doing it with you right now, step by step, like I have never used AI before.
3. At the end, tell me one thing to try tomorrow.
```

```
Ask me anything you need before you start.
```

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## Step 2: build one system for your actual job

A week of daily use and you'll spot it: the one task you repeat that eats the most time. That's your first system.

In Claude, that means a **Project**: a workspace that already knows your job. Upload a few past examples of the task done well, write the standing rules in plain English ("this is who I am, this is the tone, always ask before assuming"), and from then on every chat inside it starts warm.

The difference is hard to overstate. A chatbot answers questions. A Project does your recurring work in your voice. One is a toy, the other is a skill your employer notices.

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## Step 3: make it visible

This is the step everyone skips, and it's the one that changes your career.

- **Keep a wins list.** One line each time AI saved you time: "invoice chasing email, 20 minutes to 2." Numbers, not vibes.
- **Teach one colleague one thing.** The photo-to-calendar trick, the email draft, whatever landed for you. Teaching it is what makes it stick, and it quietly makes you the AI person.
- **Say yes when asked.** Once the wins list exists and one colleague has seen it work, you will get asked. That's the moment "worried about AI" turns into "the one who gets it".

Nobody reskills a whole workforce from the top down. It happens one person at a time, and the person it happens to first is the safest one in the room.

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## The one rule

Start on low-stakes work. Your own admin, your own drafts, your own planning. Anything that goes to a customer or your boss, you read before it leaves your hands. AI does the boring part, you stay the sender.

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This guide lives at <https://fionntobin.com/guides/learn-ai-3-steps> and gets updated when the tools change. More free guides: <https://fionntobin.com/guides>