
6 STEP GUIDE TO UX DISCOVERY RESEARCH

This guide is a practical, step-by-step framework to help startups conduct effective UX research without expensive tools or agencies. Outlines six simple stages to understand user needs, test ideas, and build products people truly want.

Introduction

A simple, guided 6-week sprint to help you understand your users, validate your product idea, and avoid wasting time building the wrong thing. No UX background required.

Who Is This For?

- Early-stage startup founders
- Building digital health or fitness tools
- Need to test assumptions, understand users, and shape features

What You Need

- 1-2 hours per week
- Trello (or Notion) board (template provided)
- Google Drive or Notion for notes & templates
- Willingness to speak to users



The 6 step framework

Why UX research matters?

Bad user experience can sink even the best ideas. Good UX keeps users engaged, reduces costly mistakes, and sets you apart in crowded markets. But here's the secret: you don't need expensive agencies or complicated tools to get started.

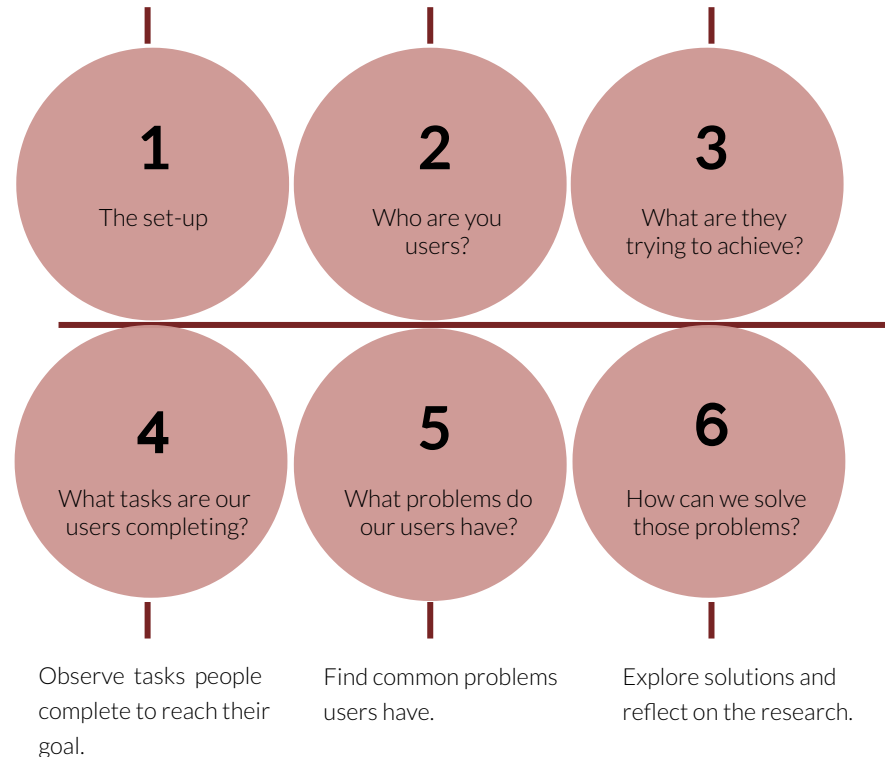
You need clarity, 6 simple steps, and confidence.

Each step of the framework is broken down into weekly

Start with the goal. Plan and manage how you achieve the goals.

Learn about people who are that need your product/service.

Focus on what your user is trying to complete and how you fit in.

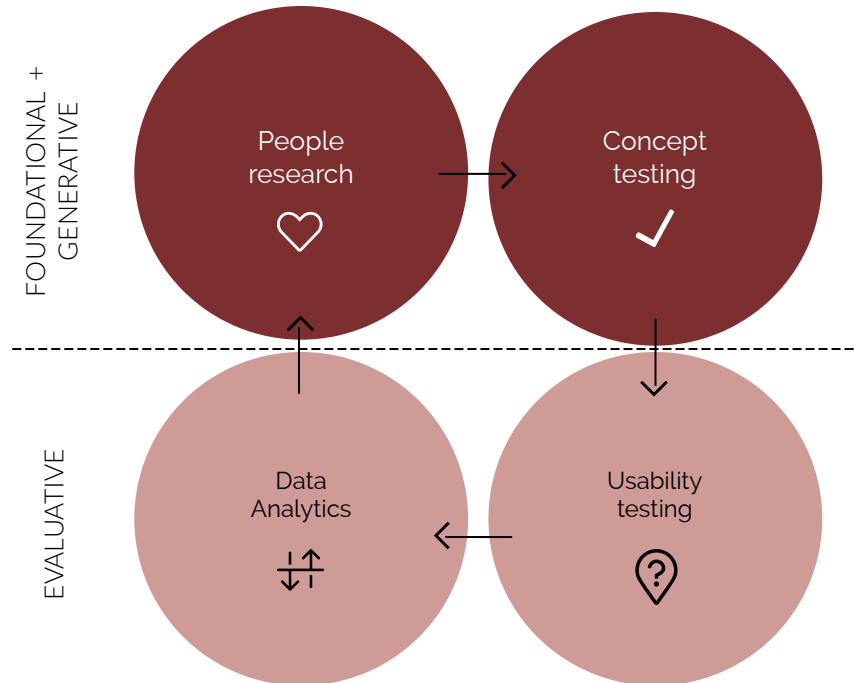


Types of research

How will I know what style of research to use?

In each of the weekly frameworks (sprint) there's a suggested method. They fall into 4 categories.

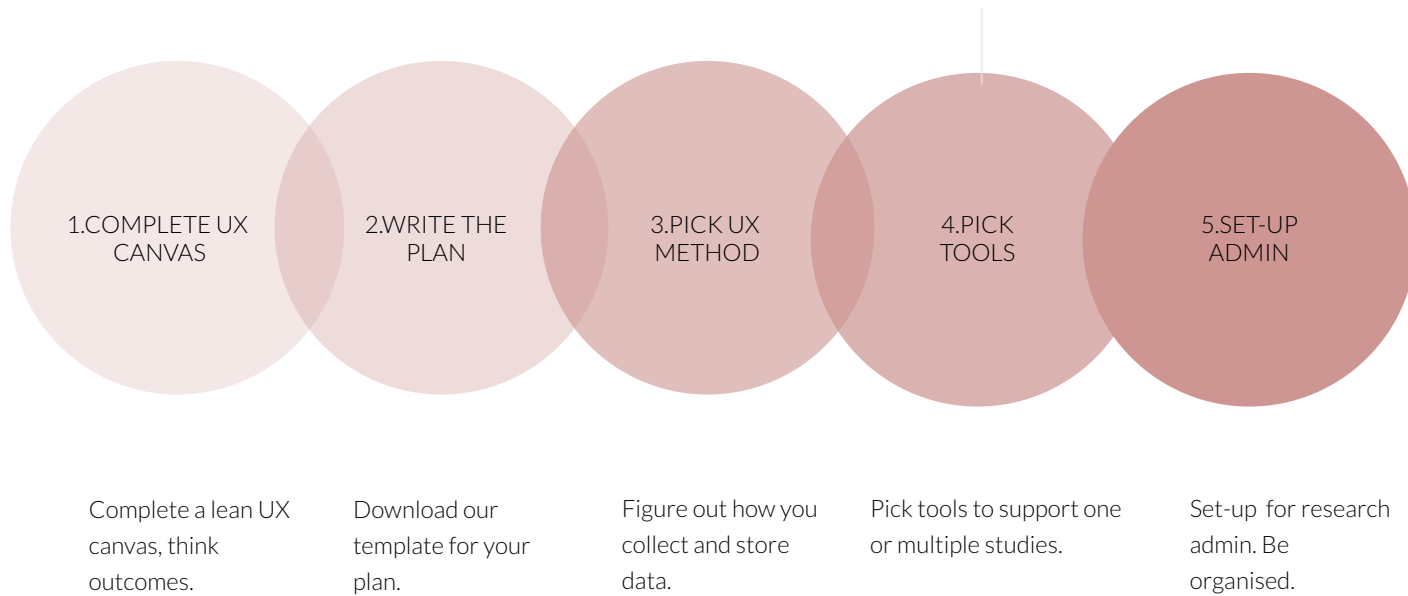
- Observing people to see how they do things now and what problems or barriers they face
- Use generative methods to explore relevant aspects of their lives and work
- Measure how your product/service is used
- Examine existing data (for example analytics, support logs, forums and social media, papers)



Step by step 6 week discovery guide

Week 1

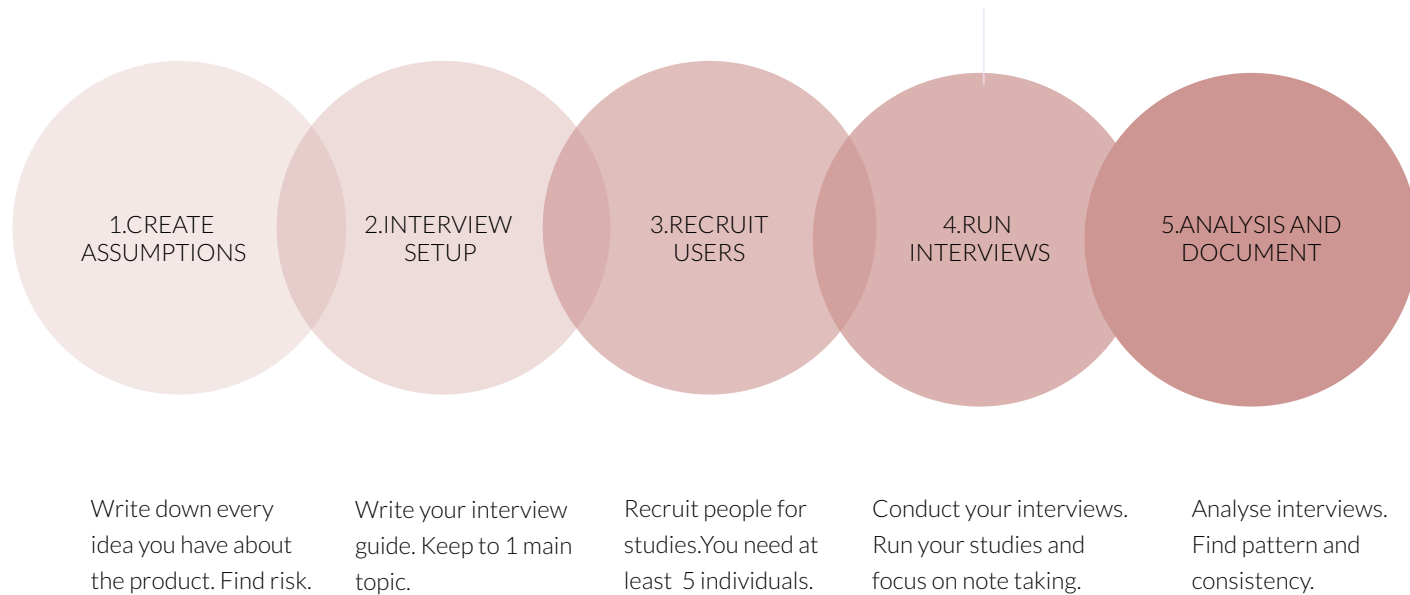
Focus on the set-up, **bad processes kill product UX Research.**



Who are the users?

Week 2

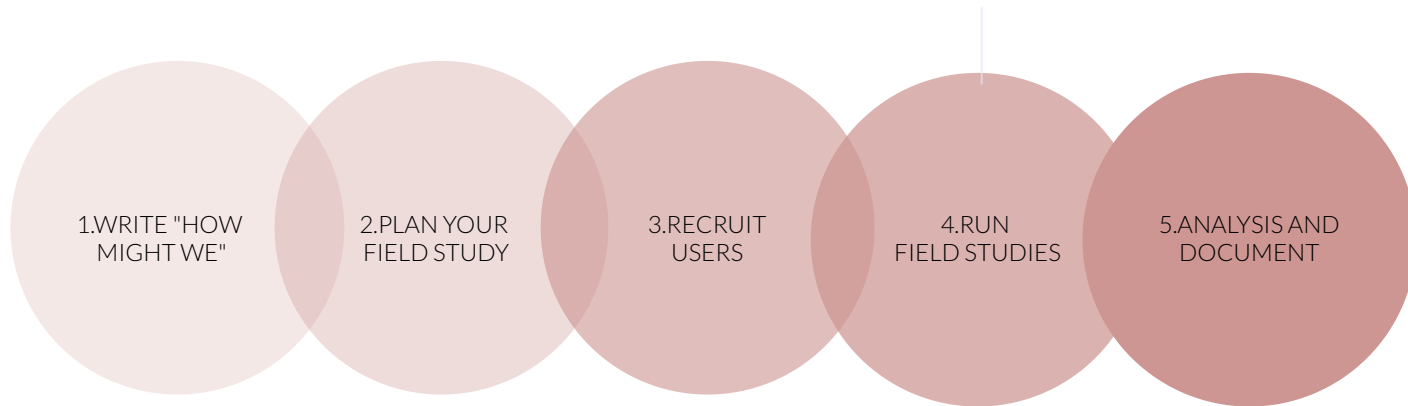
Use personas as a visual framework, **plan to outcome** is processes driven research,



What are they trying to achieve?

Week 3

Focus on creating rich user journeys that reflect real world scenarios.



Align on the problem you're trying to solve, start with tasks

Focus on what they do, not what they say. Avoid vague goals.

Use proportionate incentives for sessions.

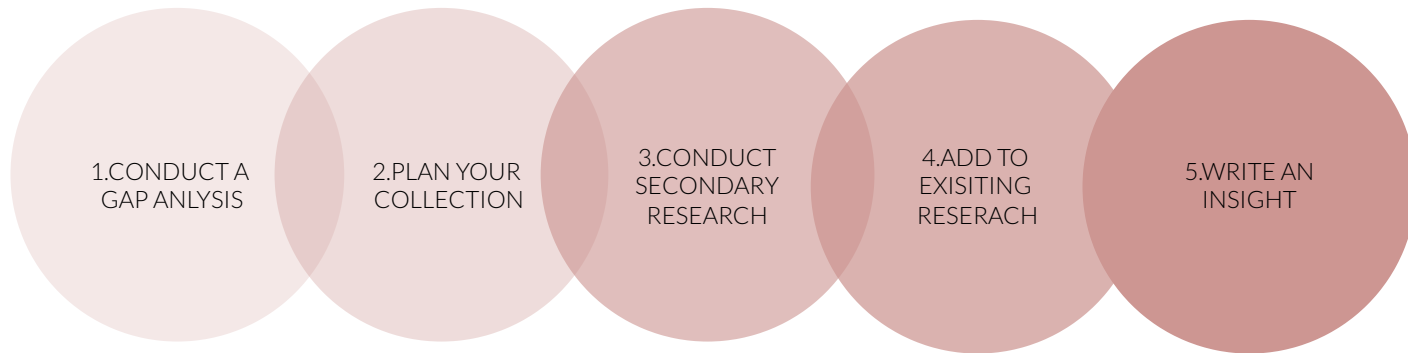
Use less invasive field studies. Tech is your friend.

Keep the context and analyse the steps.

What tasks are users completing?

Week 4

Quantitative research is essential if you want to think about if the problem at scale.



Identify gaps in data or knowledge. Its all about data confidence

Find digital conversations on socials media.

Collect resources. Keep it organised and time boxed.

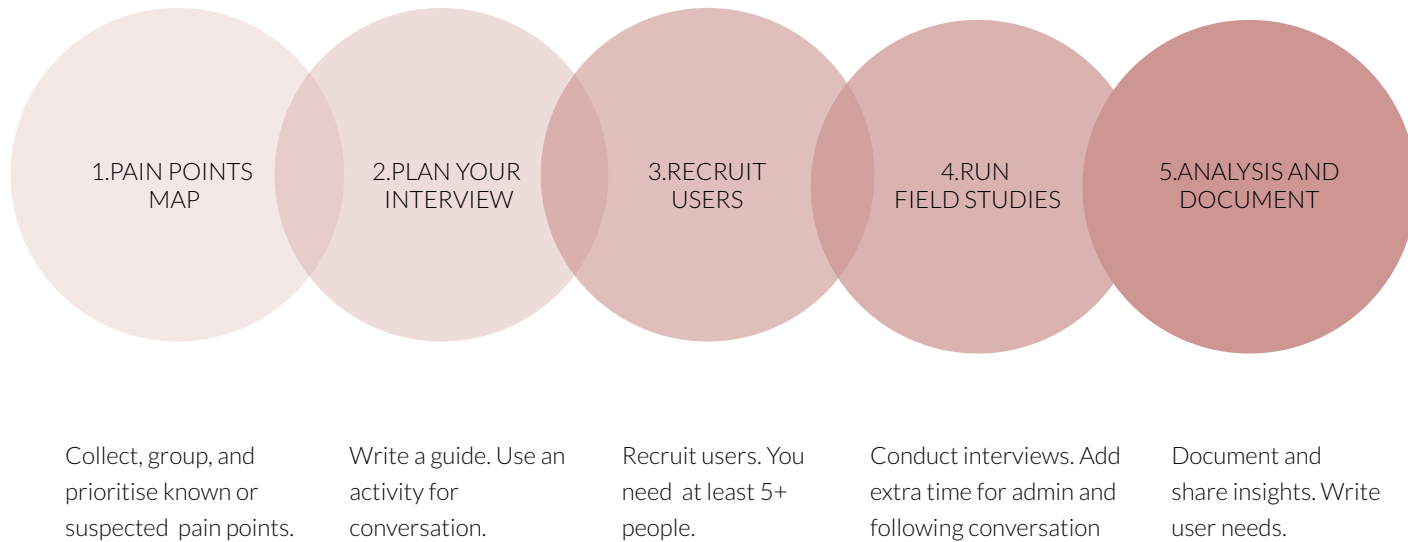
Map together. Tell the full story through data by adding it to outputs.

Write a point of view. Add documents to cite a view.

What problems do users have?

Week 5

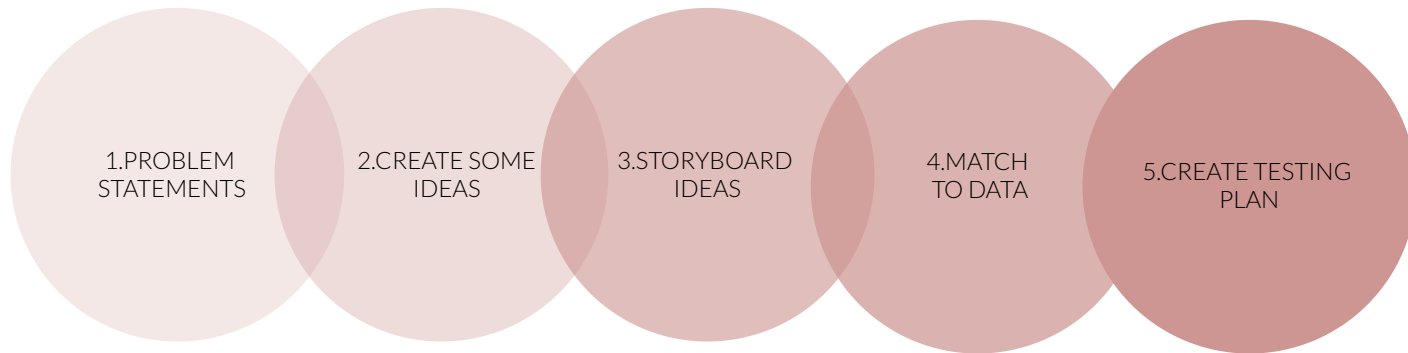
Find problems, if you don't understand what problem you're fixing you're wasting money



How can we solve those problems?

Week 6

The bit everyone loves, coming up with **features and designs to test and develop.**



identify the problem(s) you want to solve and success criteria.

Unleash your creative flow with solutions, don't limit yourself!

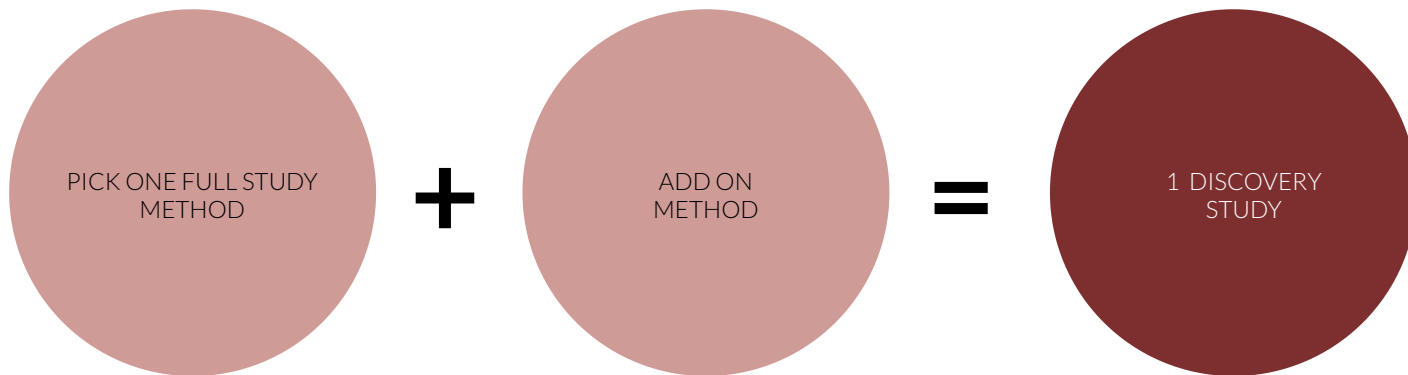
Draw them out in a storyboard and map the steps.

Add data to eliminate ideas that don't meet user needs.

Take a little break and think about testing.

DISCOVERY RECIPE CARD

32% OF USERS ARE WILLING TO LEAVE A BRAND THEY LOVE AFTER ONE BAD EXPERIENCE.



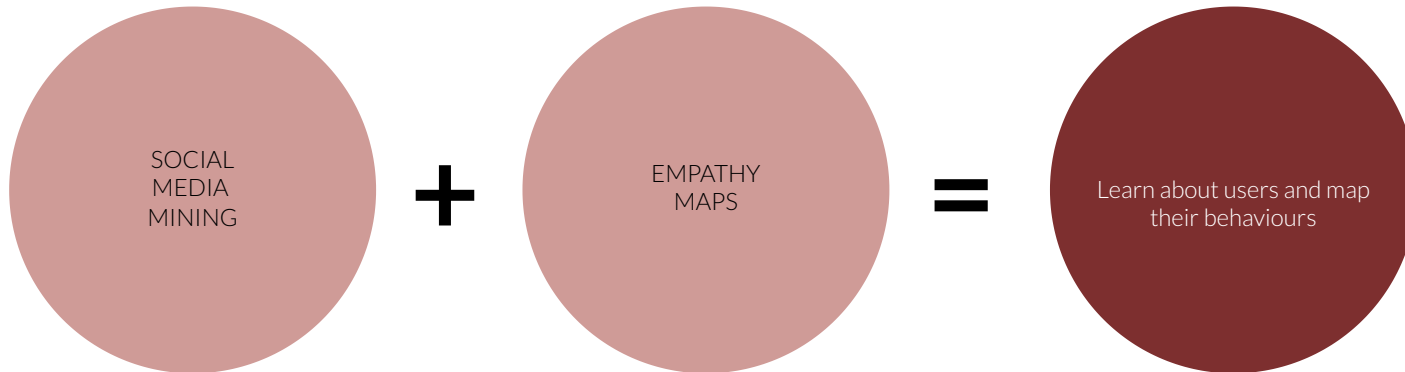
Recipe card for success

But product discovery, dual agile, continual feedback loops all have one thing in common. They focus on blended approaches so you can consistently and continuously learn about your user. Discovery activities don't need a "phase". Do them when you have a trigger.

How are we going to
spend our 6 weeks?

DISCOVERY SPRINT ONE

week 1: Who are the users?



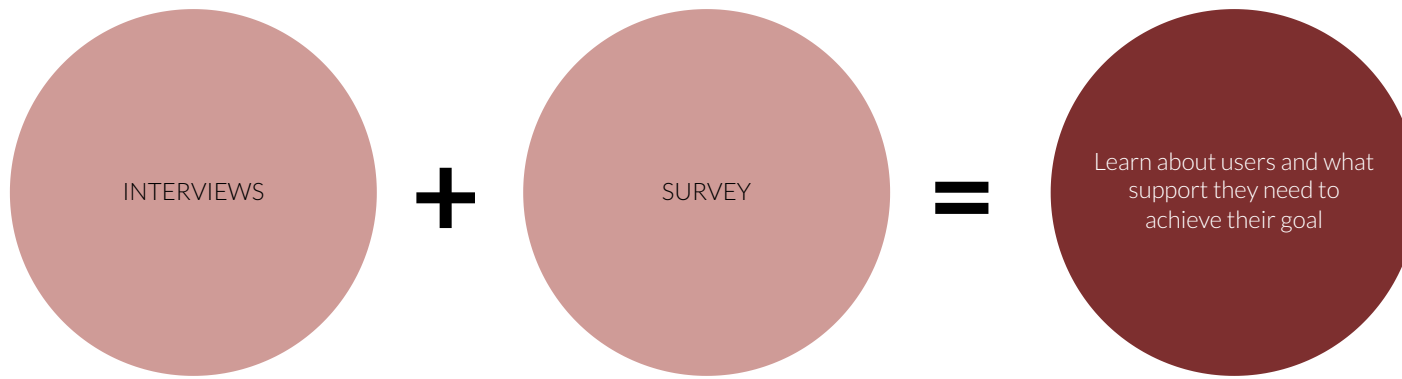
- Develop 2 personas: one for personal trainers, another for clients (fitness app users).
- Use your social media mapping idea here: collect and categorize feedback from app stores (e.g., MyFitnessPal, Trainerize, TrueCoach) and fitness forums.
- Create assumptions about trainers and clients based on existing apps.

Deliverables

- Personas
- App feedback map
- Lean UX canvas

DISCOVERY SPRINT TWO

Week 2: What are they trying to achieve?



- Interviews with 5–6 personal trainers.
- Explore their goals (e.g., tracking progress, communication, managing schedules).
- Understand what tools they currently use and where their workflows break down.

Deliverables

- Interview summaries
- Journey map of a trainer's typical day or client interaction
- "How Might We" questions

DISCOVERY SPRINT THREE

Week 3: What task are they completing?



- Field studies or contextual inquiry if possible (or remote equivalents like screen recordings or diary studies).
- Ask participants to walk through how they currently complete key tasks (e.g., tracking workouts, goal-setting).

Deliverables

- Task analysis
- Screenshots of current tool usage mapped to each task
- Updated journey maps

DISCOVERY SPRINT FOUR

Week 4: What problems do users have?



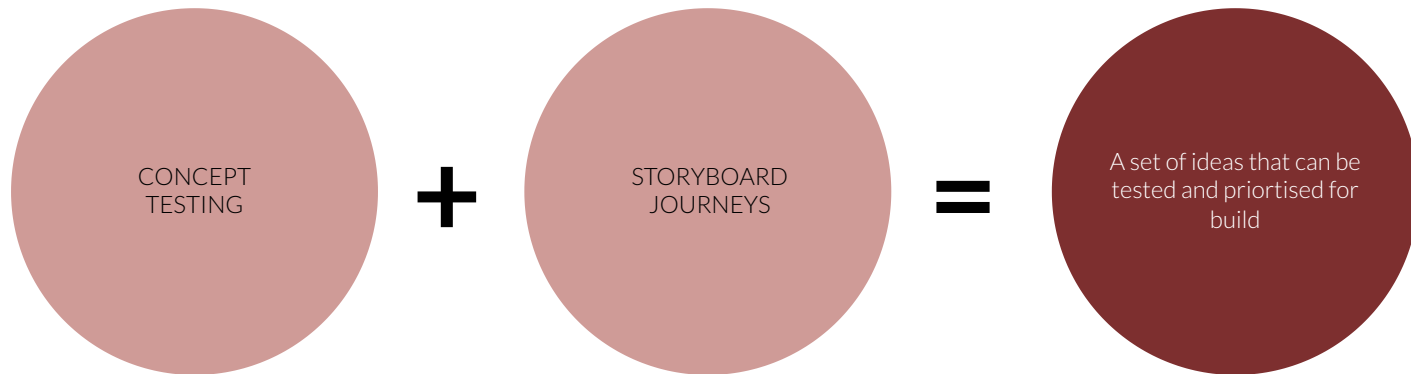
- Continue your social media map as a secondary research layer.
- Gap analysis across trainer and client workflows.
- Run client interviews (5+ people) to understand their frustrations with current fitness tools.

Deliverables

- Problem map
- Quotes and themes from interviews
- Comparative UX issues across competitor tools

DISCOVERY SPRINT FIVE

Week 5: How can we solve those problems?



- Ideation workshop with internal team (use problem statements + data)
- Sketch and storyboard key features (e.g., integrated scheduling, workout tracking, progress dashboards)
- Prioritise features based on insights

Deliverables

- Feature matrix
- Storyboards
- Early wireframes

DISCOVERY SPRINT SIX

Week 6: Next steps



- Build quick clickable prototypes (even Figma or pen-and-paper to start)
- Set up usability tests with personal trainers and clients
- Write up testing plan (goals, tasks, metrics)

Deliverables

- A set of user needs for writing design requirements
- Testing plan
- Success metrics

Tools for UX Research

How much will they cost?

It's easy to get swept into buying expensive tools. You end up with a tool that's far too advanced for your skills and goals. Instead of focusing on tools that promise everything, here's the basics.

- A way to conduct remote studies
- Somewhere to track research
- Track and contact people
- Secure way to hold data
- Basic analytic tool
- Data visualisation

You may have spent time and money on creating quality basic research and not know where to go next. Get in touch and we will guide you through step by step.



STUDIES

From interviews to diary studies, any user research session should have a tool to make both yours and the participants life easier.



ZOOM

Great for interviews and user testing. Most people have had some form of interaction with zoom and can be used on multiple devices.



TYPEFORM

Form building experts. Easy to use and provides photo and text questions. Up to ten questions per form with templates for inspo.



OPTIMAL WORKSHOP

Small scale card sorts, tree testing and surveys. Perfect for getting started with research. The real trick is making the best use of the free plan!

NEED HELP IMPLEMENTING YOUR PLAN?

I am currently looking to test our service with start-ups. You will receive 1 month of FREE research and in return I can share the work as a case study.

Get in touch with me Hannah@SprintDecks.com