OutcomeCatalyst

A STARTER GUIDE

Claude for Commercial Real Estate

How to get Claude running this afternoon, and five jobs it can take off your desk this week.

Written for
Owners, operators, acquisitions, asset management

Time to read
About 20 minutes

Technical skill needed
None

outcomecatalyst.com
August 2026

WHAT IS IN HERE

Contents

Six short sections. Read it straight through in twenty minutes, or skip to the part you need.

1 **What Claude is, and what it is good at** 3
In plain terms, and what that means for a property business specifically

2 **Getting set up** 5
Download it, sign in, pick a plan. Ten minutes

3 **How to ask for things** 7
Four rules that change the answers, and three prompts you can copy

4 **Five jobs to try this week** 9
Leases, broker emails, rent rolls, investor updates, the diligence list

5 **Teaching it your way of working** 11
How to stop explaining yourself every time you open a new chat

6 **Where this stops** 13
What it will not do, and what to do about that

7 **What OutcomeCatalyst does** 14
How we take those four limits off the table, and when to call us

BEFORE YOU START

There is one app to download and no code anywhere in this guide. If you can install a program and write an email, you can do everything in here.

PART 1

What Claude is, and what it is good at

Claude is a chat window you can hand documents to. You type a question, you attach a file, and it answers. That is the whole idea.

The useful way to think about it: **Claude is a very fast reader who never gets bored.**

Give it a 68 page lease and ask what the renewal notice window is, and you get an answer in about thirty seconds. Give it eleven broker emails and your buy box and ask which three are worth underwriting, and you get a ranked list with a reason next to each one. Give it a rent roll and a trailing twelve and ask which line items are one-time, and it will tell you which ones look like they were dressed up for a sale.

It is not a database and it does not connect to Yardi. It reads what you give it and answers what you ask. That is a smaller thing than the hype suggests and a much bigger thing than most people expect the first time they try it.

What it is genuinely good at in this business

- **Reading long documents and pulling out the specifics.** Leases, offering memos, loan documents, estoppels, purchase agreements. Anything where the answer is in there somewhere and finding it takes an hour.
- **Turning a mess into a table.** Twelve rent roll formats from twelve sellers, all reshaped into the same columns.
- **First drafts of things nobody wants to write.** The investor letter, the LOI, the tenant notice, the diligence request list.
- **Comparing things.** This offer against that one. The amendment against the original. What the seller says against what the operating statement shows.
- **Asking better questions than you had time to think of.** Hand it a deal and ask what you should be worried about.

What it is not good at

- **Knowing anything about your portfolio.** It does not know your properties, your tenants, or your standards until you tell it, in that conversation.
- **Being right about numbers without being checked.** It will produce a confident, well-written answer that is wrong, and it will look exactly like the ones that are right.
- **Doing anything in another system.** It cannot update Yardi, send an email, or file anything. It writes, you act.
- **Market data it was not given.** If you did not paste the comps in, it does not have the comps.

THE ONE HABIT THAT MATTERS

Check the numbers. Every time, at least by spot check. The rule people who use this well follow is simple: **it removes the typing, not the judgment.** A missed renewal notice window costs six figures, and the fact that a machine typed it does not change who is responsible.

Where the time actually goes

The pattern in nearly every property business is the same. Four or five systems that do not talk to each other, and a person in the middle assembling the answer by hand.

THE THING THAT TAKES TOO LONG	WHAT CLAUDE CHANGES
Reading a lease for the dates and options	Half a day becomes twenty minutes, and you get a table instead of a highlighted PDF
Triaging the broker inbox	An hour of skimming becomes a ranked shortlist with a reason on each line
Getting a seller's rent roll into your format	An afternoon of retyping becomes a first pass you correct
Writing the quarterly investor letter	A blank page becomes a draft built from the actuals you supply
Building the diligence request list	Digging up the last one becomes a tailored list in five minutes

One honest number

MRI Software, which sells lease abstraction software, reports that automated abstraction cuts manual review time by **50 to 75 percent**. That is a vendor talking about its own product, so treat it as directional rather than audited. It is also the most conservative figure published by anyone willing to put their name on it, which is why we use it instead of the larger numbers in blog posts.

Worth knowing: no software company has published a case study with hard numbers for a commercial real estate owner-operator. Anyone who tells you otherwise is selling something. What is in this guide is what we have watched work, described plainly enough that you can go try it this afternoon and decide for yourself.

PART 2

Getting set up

Ten minutes, start to finish. Get the desktop app rather than using the website, because the desktop app lets you drag files straight in.

STEP ONE, DOWNLOAD IT

claude.ai/download

Mac, Windows, iPhone, and Android. Free to download.

Download Claude

If that link does not open, type **claude.ai/download** into your browser. The same page is also at claude.com/download.

The five steps

1. **Download the app**
   Click Download under macOS or Windows, whichever you are on. You need macOS 11 or newer, or Windows 10 or newer.

2. **Open the file to install it**
   On a Mac it lands in your Applications folder. On Windows it lands in your Start menu.

3. **Sign in**
   Use your work email. If your firm already has Claude, use the account they gave you.

4. **Pick a plan**
   See the table below. Most people reading this want Pro.

5. **Drag a document in and ask it something**
   That is it. There is no setup wizard and nothing to configure.

Which plan

PLAN	COST	WHO IT IS FOR
Free	Nothing	Fine for trying it. You will hit usage limits partway through a long lease.
Pro	$17 a month billed annually, or $20 monthly	**Start here.** Enough usage for real work, and it includes Projects, which matter in Part 5.
Max	From $100 a month	If you are running documents through it all day and Pro keeps stopping you.
Team	$20 a seat a month billed annually, minimum two seats	More than one person, with shared settings and central billing. Your conversations are not used to train the model by default.

What not to put in it

- **Anything under a confidentiality agreement you have not checked.** Data room and NDA language increasingly bars putting the contents into an AI tool. Check the agreement, not your instinct.
- **Tenant financial statements given to you in confidence**, unless your plan allows it and counsel has looked at it.
- **Anything you would not email to someone outside your firm.** Rough test, good one.

> ON WHETHER YOUR CONVERSATIONS TRAIN THE MODEL
>
> On Free, Pro, and Max it is a setting you control, off unless you switch it on. On Team and Enterprise, Anthropic does not use your conversations for training by default. If confidentiality is a live concern, Team is the cleaner answer and the one to put in front of counsel.

Two settings worth changing on day one

1. ### Turn on file handling

   Open **Customize** and switch on code execution and file creation. This lets Claude open a spreadsheet and hand one back, and it is required for Part 5.

2. ### Make a Project for a live deal

   A folder with a memory. Anything you put in it, Claude sees in every conversation inside. More in Part 5, but make one now.

IF YOU GET STUCK

The most common problem is not seeing a menu this guide mentions. That is almost always because file handling is off, or because you are signed in on the website rather than in the app. Check those two first.

PART 3

How to ask for things

Most people get mediocre answers because they ask mediocre questions. Four rules fix nearly all of it.

Rule 1. Say who you are and what the answer is for

Weak: "Summarize this lease."

Better: "I am the asset manager. I need every date I have to act on in the next 24 months and what happens if I miss each one."

The second one works because it says what the answer is for. Same document, completely different output.

Rule 2. Give it the document, do not describe the document

Drag the actual PDF in. Do not retype the clause you think is relevant and ask about that, because you have already made the judgment call about which clause matters, and that judgment was the part you wanted help with.

If a lease has amendments, attach all of them separately and say which is which. Do not merge them into one file first.

Rule 3. Say what the answer should look like

If you want a table, ask for a table and name the columns. If you want one page, say one page. If you want it in the voice you send to investors, say so. Unasked, you get prose, and prose is the hardest format to check.

Rule 4. Ask what it could not find

Nobody does this and it is the most valuable of the four. End with: "List anything you could not find in the documents, and anything you inferred rather than read."

You get a short list. That list is your follow-up request to the seller, and it is also how you catch the thing it made up.

ONE MORE THING

Attach first, ask second. With a long document, putting your question at the end measurably improves the answer.

Three prompts you can copy

Use these as they are. Replace the italics with your own details.

PROMPT 1 · READING A LEASE

I have attached a lease and [two] amendments, labelled with their dates. You are a lease administrator. Build me a table with one row per obligation and these four columns: what it is, the date, what I have to do, and what happens if I miss it. Cover the renewal option, any termination right, rent escalations, and the expense recovery reconciliation date. For every row, give me the page and clause number it came from. If something is not stated in the documents, write "not stated" rather than guessing. Then list separately anything you could not find and anything you inferred.

PROMPT 2 · SORTING THE BROKER INBOX

Below are [eleven] inbound deals. My buy box is: [asset type, markets, price range, minimum cap rate, anything you will not look at]. Rank them best to worst against that buy box, one line each on why. Then tell me the top three worth underwriting this week, and for each one the single question I should ask the broker before I spend any time on it. Do not underwrite anything. I only want to know what deserves the hour.

PROMPT 3 · THE SECOND OPINION

You have just given me [the analysis above]. Now argue the other side. What is the strongest case that this deal is worse than it looks? What would have to be true for me to regret this in eighteen months? Be specific and use the numbers in the documents. Do not hedge.

That third one is worth more than it looks. Left alone, Claude tends to agree with the framing you gave it. Asking it to argue against itself is how you get the other half.

PART 4

Five jobs to try this week

In order. The first takes ten minutes and needs nothing confidential, so start there even if it is not the one you care about.

1 Sort the broker inbox

10 MINUTES

What you need: the last week or two of inbound deals, and your buy box written down in a sentence or two.

What to do: open a new chat, paste the emails or drag the offering memos in, and use Prompt 2.

What you get: a ranked list with a reason on each line, the top three worth an hour, and one question to ask each broker first.

Check before you act: spot check two rankings against the underlying document. If it got the cap rate or the market wrong on either, your buy box description was too vague. Tighten it and run it again.

2 Read a lease properly

30 MINUTES

What you need: one executed lease and every amendment, as separate files.

What to do: drag them all in, labelled with their dates, and use Prompt 1.

What you get: a table of every date you have to act on, with the page and clause each came from, plus a list of what is missing.

This is the one that changes how people feel about the whole thing. Do it on a lease you already know well, so you can tell immediately whether it got it right.

Check before you act: verify the landlord and tenant names, the commencement and expiration dates, and every option notice window by hand against the document. Those four cost real money. Then check that a couple of the page references point where they say they do.

3 Straighten out a seller's rent roll

30 MINUTES

What you need: the rent roll and the trailing twelve months of operating statements.

What to do: attach both and ask for the in-place net operating income, with every adjustment named and a note on which line items look one-time rather than recurring.

What you get: a bridge from the seller's stated number to a normalized one, with each step shown, and a list of what looks dressed up.

Check before you act: this gives you the clean starting point for your model, not the model. Every adjustment it names is a question for the seller, not a conclusion.

4 Draft the investor update

20 MINUTES

What you need: this quarter's actuals, last quarter's letter, and anything notable that happened.

What to do: attach all three and ask for a draft in the same structure and voice as the previous letter, using only the numbers you supplied. Add: "Flag any number in the draft that did not come directly from the files I gave you."

What you get: a first draft you edit rather than a blank page you stare at.

Check before you act: every number, against the actuals. Investor communications carry real obligations and a well-written wrong number is worse than no letter at all.

5 Build the diligence list and put it on a clock

15 MINUTES

What you need: the executed letter of intent, or just the deal terms and the closing date.

What to do: give it the asset type, the closing date, and today's date, and ask for a diligence request list organized by workstream, with an owner column and a status column, plus the items that must clear before you are past your out.

What you get: a tracker with days remaining at the top and the critical items separated from the routine ones.

Check before you act: your own last three deals are the real template. Paste in your previous checklist and ask what is missing from it, rather than starting from the generic version.

IF YOU ONLY DO ONE

Do number two, on a lease you know by heart. Half an hour, and you will know whether this is worth your time. Better test than anything we could write here.

PART 5

Teaching it your way of working

By the third time you type out your buy box, you will want to stop. Two ways to stop, easiest first.

The easy way: a Project

A Project is a folder with a memory. Put things in it once, and every conversation inside that folder already knows them.

1. **Make a Project**
   Click Projects in the app, then create one. Name it after a deal, a property, or just "Acquisitions."

2. **Put your standing context in it**
   Your buy box, your underwriting assumptions, the format your investor letters take. Whatever you explain twice.

3. **Work inside it**
   Every conversation there starts knowing all of it. You never type your buy box again.

Free accounts get five Projects. Paid accounts get as many as you want.

WHAT TO PUT IN, AND WHAT TO LEAVE OUT

Put in what Claude could not work out on its own: your criteria, your thresholds, your formats, your named markets. Do not dump your whole drive in. More material makes answers worse, not better, because the important part gets buried.

The stronger way: a skill

A skill is a saved instruction sheet Claude picks up on its own when it becomes relevant. You write down how you want a job done once, and from then on it does it that way, everywhere, without you asking.

The difference: a Project is context that sits inside one folder. A skill is a procedure that shows up wherever the situation calls for it.

We wrote five of these for you

One for each job in Part 4. They are free, they are yours to edit, and there is nothing to sign up for.

One file, one upload, all five workflows. Claude opens whichever one your question needs and ignores the rest, so you install once and never think about it again.

THE SKILLS PACK

outcomecatalyst.com/resources/real-estate-skills

One zip. Five workflows. Free, no sign-up.

Download the pack

Inside: **oc-real-estate-toolkit.zip** to upload, each workflow on its own if you would rather switch them on one at a time, and unzipped copies so you can read them before installing anything.

Installing the pack

About a minute. Five clicks and you are done.

If you do not see a Skills section in Customize, file handling is switched off. Go back to Part 2 and switch it on first.

1. **Open Customize**
   It is in the app sidebar.

2. **Click Skills, then the plus button**
   Then choose Create skill.

3. **Choose Upload a skill**
   Pick **oc-real-estate-toolkit.zip** from the pack you downloaded.

4. **Check it is switched on**
   It should appear in the list with a toggle already on.

5. **Go back to work**
   Ask about a lease, or paste in broker emails. Claude picks the right workflow on its own.

The five workflows are the same five jobs from Part 4: deal screening, lease abstraction, the rent roll, due diligence, and the investor letter. You already know what they do. The pack just means you stop explaining how you want them done.

> KNOW THIS BEFORE YOU USE THEM
>
> These deliberately leave the scoring weights, thresholds, and buy box rules blank, because those are yours. The first run will ask you for your criteria rather than answer. That is intentional. Give it twenty minutes once and save your answers in a Project.

PART 6

Where this stops

Everything in this guide works. It also runs out, in the same place every time, and it is worth knowing where before you build a process on it.

You will notice it around the fourth or fifth week. The jobs in Part 4 work beautifully once. Then you want to do them thirty times, or you want somebody else to do them and get the same answer, and something changes.

The four walls

- **It only sees what you paste.** A question that crosses Yardi, the loan documents, and the operating statement means somebody has to go and get all three first. The gathering was the work.
- **The answer depends on who is typing.** You get good results. Your analyst gets different results. Nobody can say which is right.
- **Nothing gets written back.** Claude produces a table. Somebody still keys it into Yardi, and the keying is where the errors come back in.
- **There is no trail.** No record of who ran what, on which version, when. Fine for a draft. Not fine for something a lender or an auditor will look at.

> READ THIS PART CAREFULLY
>
> None of that means chat is useless. The opposite. One person with the desktop app and twenty minutes of setup gets real, immediate value, and most firms never get that far. Start here. Get the value. Just know the shape of the wall before you run at it.

What comes after

Past those four walls, what you need is different in kind, not degree. Not a better chat window. A layer underneath that connects the systems you already run, so the answer arrives without anybody assembling it, comes out the same regardless of who asked, writes back where it belongs, and leaves a record.

That is what we build at OutcomeCatalyst. If you get to the point where the fourth wall is the one in your way, that is the conversation to have. There is no rush, and everything in this guide is worth doing on its own.

Start here

Take one lease you already know by heart and ask it Prompt 1. Half an hour, and you will know.

PART 7

What OutcomeCatalyst does

The four walls in Part 6 are the reason we exist. Here is what we build, in the same plain terms as the rest of this guide.

We connect the systems you already run, so Claude works over your actual business instead of over whatever somebody remembered to paste.

Nothing gets replaced. Yardi stays. Your models stay. Your loan documents stay where they are. We put a layer underneath that reads from all of them, resolves the same property, tenant, and entity across every one, and hands Claude a single connected picture. Then the questions that used to take a person a day take a sentence.

The four walls, and what removes each one

THE WALL	WHAT WE DO ABOUT IT
It only sees what you paste	We connect to your systems directly. Property management, accounting, document stores, spreadsheets, email, the county records you pull by hand. If it has an interface, a database, or even just an export, we can read it. Nobody assembles anything first.
The answer depends on who is typing	A workflow is defined once, with your rules in it, and it runs the same way for everyone. Your analyst and your principal get the same answer to the same question, because it is the same workflow, not two people prompting.
Nothing gets written back	We write back. The abstracted lease fields land in the system of record. The normalized rent roll updates the model. The flag reaches the person who can act on it, while they can still act. No re-keying, so no second round of errors.
There is no trail	Every output records what it read, which version, when, and who ran it. Role-based access, column masking, and a full audit trail come standard. What a lender or an auditor asks for is already there.

Reasoning over more than fits in a chat

A chat window can hold one lease. It cannot hold four hundred. Ask a chat window which of your leases have a co-tenancy clause and a renewal inside eighteen months and you will be uploading files until Thursday.

With the systems connected, that is one question against the whole portfolio, and the answer arrives with the list attached. Same for cost to serve by tenant, variance between underwritten and actual across every asset, or which escalations were never billed. These are not harder questions. They are just questions nobody could ask before, because gathering the inputs cost more than the answer was worth.

THE PART PEOPLE ASK ABOUT MOST

The language model never does the arithmetic. Extraction, entity matching, joins, and every calculation run as governed code that produces the same result every time you run it. The model reads, explains, and drafts on top of that. So the numbers are repeatable and traceable to their source, and the writing is what the model is actually good at. Two different jobs, kept separate on purpose.

How it gets built

We do the work. There is no data team to hire and nothing for your people to maintain.

1. **We find the one that pays**
   A short look at how the work actually happens now, where the time goes, and which recurring decision costs the most. You get the answer to that whether or not you go further.

2. **We build one workflow**
   Not a platform, one named workflow: the data it starts from, the single thing it does, the artifact it produces, and the one person who owns it. Roughly three to four weeks with a clear before and after.

3. **It runs, and we keep it running**
   You keep the artifact and the value. We tune it and add the next one when you are ready.

A full install is typically live in about four to six weeks. A single workflow on top of an existing install is roughly three to four.

On security, plainly

Role-based access, column masking, and full audit trails come standard. For the most sensitive environments there is a locally hosted option that keeps everything on your own infrastructure, where nothing leaves your walls. We are HIPAA-aligned and SOC 2 Type 2 aligned, with the formal audit underway and expected to complete before year-end.

When to call us

Not yet, if you have not done Part 4. Go run the lease workflow on a lease you know by heart. Everything in this guide is worth doing on its own and costs you nothing but an afternoon.

Call us when you have hit a wall in Part 6 and can name it. That is the conversation worth having, and by then you will know exactly which one it is.

START WITH THE WEDGE

outcomecatalyst.com

Point us at the process that costs you the most time or money, and we will come back with the workflow, the owner, and the ROI.

Book a call

THE SMALL PRINT

Credits and disclaimers

WHAT WE USED	WHAT WE TOOK FROM IT
Anthropic claude.com, support.claude.com	Plans, prices, download instructions, system requirements, settings paths, and data handling. Checked against live pages in August 2026.
OutcomeCatalyst outcomecatalyst.com/resources/real-estate-skills	The five real estate skills in Part 5. Released under the MIT license, which is included with the files. Free to use, change, and pass on.
MRI Software	The 50 to 75 percent lease abstraction figure, which is MRI's own published claim about its own product.

This document is general information. It is not legal, tax, accounting, investment, or brokerage advice, and it does not create a professional relationship. Lease interpretation, notice requirements, default remedies, and tax treatment are governed by state law, local ordinance, and the wording of your own documents, and they vary between jurisdictions. Every workflow here produces a draft for a qualified person to review. None produces a decision. Have counsel review anything with legal effect, and your accountant review anything touching lease accounting. Product details about Claude were verified against Anthropic's pages in August 2026 and change frequently. The skills we provide are released under the MIT license and come with no warranty of accuracy or fitness for your purpose. Skills can run code on your machine with your privileges, so read anything you install, including ours. Unzipped copies are included for that reason. The MRI figure is a vendor self-report and has not been independently audited. Claude is a product of Anthropic. Yardi, MRI, ARGUS, and CoStar are trademarks of their respective owners. This is an independent guide, not affiliated with or endorsed by any of them.