

Ponytail: The Lazy Senior Dev Skill That Makes AI Agents Write 54% Less Code

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A developer released [Ponytail](#), a free skill that makes an AI coding agent act like the laziest senior engineer, the one who replaces your fifty lines with one. A skill is a set of plug-in instructions the agent loads before writing code. It climbs a short ladder: does this need to exist, is it already in the codebase, can the standard library or a native browser feature do it, and only then writes the minimum that works. Across twelve feature tickets run through

Claude Code on a real [FastAPI and React project](#), it left about 54% fewer new lines than the same agent with no skill, up to 94% where agents over-build.

Coding agents love to over-deliver. Ask for a date picker and the agent installs a library, writes a wrapper, and debates timezones; Ponytail reaches for the browser's built-in date input and turns 404 lines into 23. Less code means less to read, fewer bugs, and a smaller attack surface, and where it cut code it ran about 20% cheaper and 27% faster. Lazy, not careless: in adversarial tests it kept input validation and security every time, while a bare "write one-liners" prompt dropped a path-traversal check once in four runs.

Where [Caveman](#) trims what an agent says, Ponytail trims what it builds.

Sources:

- [Ponytail on GitHub](#)
- [Agentic benchmark: does Ponytail cut code without cutting safety?](#)
- [Issue #126: the original benchmark critique](#)
- [full-stack-fastapi-template](#), the repo used in testing

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