

Managing ADHD

Stay Organized

Clutter is the enemy of ADHD. As you move from task to task, half-finished projects will start to take over your physical and mental space. This leads to distraction, and a higher probability that things will be lost or forgotten.

- ✓ Create to-do lists. Start with the quickest and easiest items (unless there's something urgent) so you can see immediate progress.
- ✓ Keep your workspace clean. Clear your desk of everything, except for the task you're currently working on. Additionally, give yourself 5 minutes at the end of each day to tidy up.
- ✓ Downsize. Get rid of old knick-knacks, clothes, papers, and anything else you don't need around your home or office. If you've been holding onto something for 5 years because "you might need it someday", it's probably OK to part ways!
- ✓ If a task comes up that will only take 30 seconds, and you aren't doing something else important, do it right away. Now it's off your to-do list, and out of your mind forever.

Tailor Your Environment to You

What helps you concentrate, and what derails you from your work? Some people with ADHD need a lot of stimuli. They work better somewhere that's vibrant and loud. Others need the opposite: no sounds, no TVs, no phones—nothing but the task at hand. Figure out what you need, and create that environment.

Need noise and activity?

Listen to music, or turn on the TV to something that's not too interesting.

If you work in a humdrum office, try to liven up your personal workspace. Add photos, colors, and anything else that will keep you stimulated.

Schedule regular breaks to go for a walk. Set a timer during your break so you know when to get back to work.

Need peace and quiet?

If you work in a noisy office, use headphones to listen to white noise, or non-intrusive music.

Designate an office area in your home, even if it's just a corner, and remove all distractions.

Turn off your phone, hide your emails, and close your door. Limit all those pesky distractions that tend to pop up when you're working.

Live a Healthy Lifestyle

Exercise, nutrition, and sleep. Without these, you'll have a hard time taking control of your ADHD regardless of what other steps you take. Even someone without ADHD will become restless without exercise, and distracted without food or sleep. The detrimental effects are only magnified by ADHD.

Find a form of exercise you enjoy. Even a 30-minute walk can have a positive impact on your health. Sports are also a great outlet if you're a thrill-seeker (join a league to hold yourself accountable).

When it comes to sleep, everyone's a bit different. Eight hours a night is usually sufficient, but some people do require more. Get into a steady sleep routine, and stick to it (even on weekends).

Our knowledge about what foods help to curb the symptoms of ADHD is less clear, but many believe a diet that's high in protein, and low in sugar, can help. Nonetheless, it's important to make sure you eat several well-balanced meals every day. Planned meals double as a great way to stay in a routine.