

# Time Management

When you have ADHD, time can feel slippery - it's either too fast, too slow or it doesn't exist at all, until something is urgent. This isn't laziness or lack of willpower. ADHD brains process time differently. With the right tools and routine, though, you can make time more visible, manageable, and functional. Many ADHD'ers struggle to manage their time effectively. It can make boredom hard to cope with, but equally when you're engrossed in an activity, time can pass too quickly and before you know it day has turned to night.

Using some handy tools can be really helpful in managing your time - a diary, wall chart and reminders on your phone. Planning ahead is a good tip as often people with ADHD struggle with planning and task completion.

Things often take longer than you estimate so try to build in buffers of time into your routine so you have extra time to complete tasks and to transition smoothly from task to task throughout your day.

### *Tips for better time management*

**Set goals** - what do you want to achieve by the end of the day/week? Break this down into smaller goals, be specific and realistic about what you can achieve. You might find it helpful to break bigger tasks down into tiny tasks, so they don't feel so overwhelming and you feel good about completing each one.

'Do the washing up' can feel overwhelming, whereas it can be broken down into parts or done in different ways. For example:

- Empty the sink
- Put water in cups and bowls to soak for a while
- Wash all the glasses and cups
- Wash ten items
- Wash up for the length of your favourite song

Small manageable tasks reduce overwhelm and help you build momentum and maximise your dopamine levels.

**Make lists** so you don't forget things that need to be done and keep it somewhere visible and accessible like on a pinboard and on your phone so that you have it with you. It might be helpful to think in terms of:

- Things that need to be done today
- Things you would like to get done today
- Things which can wait until another day

You could try colour coding tasks according to priority.

### *Task Initiation*

Starting is often the hardest part of a task for ADHDers. A “launch step” is the smallest action that moves you from stuck to started. Examples:

- Open the document
- Put on your shoes
- Gather materials
- Write one sentence
- Set a 5-minute timer

Launch steps bypass perfectionism and activate motion. Once you are able to start a task very often you will find the momentum to carry on with it.

### *Rewards and Breaks*

- **Schedule in rewards and breaks** - using techniques like the Pomodoro technique (taking a 5 minute break after 25 minutes then a longer break after 4x25 minutes) can be super helpful and helps you remain motivated.
- **Reward yourself** with a nice hot drink, 5 minutes of a game or a book you enjoy or a little walk
- **Reflect** - Look back over your plans and be proud of what you’ve achieved, think about what worked well and what you could try next time.

### *Creating Functional Routines*

Good routines aren't strict schedules - they're helpers. Try creating simple, repeatable patterns like:

- A morning checklist
- A nightly "reset the space" routine
- A Sunday planning ritual
- A dedicated spot for keys, wallet, or chargers
- The goal is to make daily life smoother, not perfect.

### *Memory Hacks*

Working memory is tricky with ADHD, so treat your brain like a place for ideas, not storage.

### **Externalize everything!**

Use:

- Sticky notes
- Whiteboards
- Phone reminders
- A "dump list" for all tasks
- A weekly reset to clean up your lists

This isn't a weakness - it's smart design that works for you!

### *Transitioning between tasks*

ADHD brains struggle to switch gears, it's a good idea to create "buffer moments" between tasks.

Try:

- A 1-minute stretch
- A quick drink of water
- A short walk between rooms
- A timer that rings before you need to move on to the next task

Transitions are not wasted time - they're the bridge your brain needs.

Time management with ADHD is a skill, not a moral issue. You're experimenting, you're learning, and you're doing the best you can with a brain that's wired uniquely. Every small win - setting a timer, completing one micro-step, or even noticing you're off track is progress. You can find out what works for you and build useful routines, but it takes time, so be kind to yourself.