

Patient information from BMJ

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ADHD in adults: strategies for managing daily tasks

Learning that you have ADHD might feel overwhelming at first. You might also feel relieved, as it might help explain certain behaviours or struggles you've experienced. There's no 'cure' for ADHD, but there are different treatments and strategies that can help you manage it.

This information provides tips and strategies to help you manage ADHD in your daily life. For more information on ADHD treatment, see our information titled: *ADHD: what are the treatment options?*

People with ADHD often struggle with staying focused, feeling restless, or making impulsive decisions. This can make it difficult to stay organised, complete tasks, or manage responsibilities at work, university, or home.

In addition to treatments like medicines or behavioural therapy, there are strategies you can use in your day-to-day life to help you manage your ADHD symptoms. Below are some strategies that might work for you.

- Create a structured and consistent daily routine that includes exercise, work, and relaxation. Use a planner or a digital calendar to map out your day in advance and help you stay on track.
- Use alarms or timers to stay focused and manage your time.
- Take regular, short breaks to help you concentrate while completing tasks.
- Break down big jobs into smaller stages, and give yourself a reward for completing each step.
- If you can't remember a task or instruction, ask the person to repeat it rather than trying to guess.
- Explore ways to stay organised and remember things more easily. This could include trying out different tools like checklists, notebooks, timers, phone alerts, or visual reminders until you discover what works best for you.
- Dedicate a specific area for work that has few distractions.

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- Try to minimise clutter in your home or office, and find ways to help you remember where things are. Group similar items together, and keep items you use often in specific spots to avoid losing them. For example, you could keep your keys, wallet, and phone in a specific spot near the door.
- Organise folders on your phone or computer so that it's easier to find things. You could group similar files into folders, like work documents and personal photos. Keep apps you use often on your home screen or in a dedicated folder for easy access.
- Make sure to get enough exercise. While everyone benefits from staying active, exercise can be especially helpful for people with ADHD. It can improve focus and help release extra energy.
- Try to find ways to improve your sleep. Many people with ADHD have trouble sleeping, but getting enough rest is important. Avoiding caffeine late in the day, creating a calming bedtime routine, and making sure your room is comfortable for sleeping might help.

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