

Self Help Resource Pack

For People with ADHD



Self Help Resource Pack created by NHS Lothian Adult ADHD and Autism Resource Team: This pack has been put together using tips that adults with ADHD have found helpful.

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Introduction to Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

What is it?

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a group of behavioural symptoms that include inattentiveness and impulsiveness.

Symptoms of ADHD tend to be noticed at an early age, though not in every case. The symptoms of ADHD usually improve with age, but many adults who are diagnosed with the condition at a young age continue to experience some challenges, including experiencing extreme and unpredictable emotions.

Parents and Teacher often notice the following behaviours in a child:

Inattention and Impulsivity	Hyperactivity
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Gets distracted all the time● Has trouble sticking to doing something for any length of time, particularly if boring or uninteresting● Is usually impulsive e.g., does things on the spur of the moment without thinking● Has more than the usual difficulties in concentrating.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Is unusually over-active.

How is ADHD diagnosed?

ADHD is usually diagnosed following difficulties at school. A team of professionals from the Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) spend time assessing a child's behaviour and ways of thinking, at home and at school, before making a diagnosis.

Sometimes these issues are not picked up in childhood. If you are seen for the first time as an adult, your GP can carry out some screening and would normally refer you to the local Mental Health Team for an assessment. The assessment process takes time, and usually needs several appointments. Assessment identifies both the difficulties described above, but also their impact. The Mental Health Team will normally ask to speak with someone who knew you well in childhood, to find out their views about your difficulties.

It was previously thought that ADHD symptoms reduce as children grow, but we now know that this is not always the case. Some problems, like hyperactivity, do get less with age. As people mature, many find their own way of managing the problems. Taking part in sports or having a physical or active job could be helpful. Other strategies, such as taking drugs or alcohol may result in unintended negative consequences. However, other problems may develop, like increased risk-taking, troubles keeping a job or a steady relationship, managing to keep appointments, pay bills on time, or regulating mood.

These can make people feel anxious, low in mood, frustrated and angry, and can have a "knock-on" effect on jobs, relationships, and self-esteem. However, all of these problems can improve, which is why it is important to get the right help now.

How common is ADHD?

- Around 4 in every 100 school-aged children have ADHD
- Around 2 in every 100 adults have ADHD
- In adults, the number of men and women affected is almost equal.



What causes ADHD?

It's not entirely clear what causes ADHD. It's likely that **genes** are involved – about one third of people with ADHD have at least one parent with similar symptoms. There is also evidence that suggests there are differences in how your brain work. People with ADHD often describe having a “noisy” brain which never quite quietens or having problems with processing information in the same way other people do. It is also likely that some factors from your childhood experience will have increased the likelihood of you developing ADHD.

What is it like to have ADHD?

You are the expert on that. However, some of the common features people describe are:

Some of the common features adults with ADHD describe are:	
Inattention and impulsivity	Hyperactivity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty turning your thoughts off – having a constantly busy mind • Difficulty with listening to other people - finishing other people's sentences for them or interrupting them, or saying things at the wrong time • Getting easily distracted and finding it hard to notice details. Getting bored quickly • Difficulty following detailed instructions • Finding it hard to organise yourself • Starting lots of projects and not finishing • Being forgetful and losing or misplacing things • Tending to do things on the spur of the moment, impulsively, without thinking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding it hard to wait - you fidget and can't sit still • Getting irritable, impatient or frustrated • Feeling restless or edgy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being creative, and able to look at things from a different perspective. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling energetic and enthusiastic about things that interest you • Being sociable and fun.

The good news is it isn't all bad.

There are lots of things that can help. This resource pack will help to point you in the direction of beginning to make these changes.

Impulsiveness in adults with ADHD

What is it?

Impulsivity is like not being able to press a 'pause' button. For example, not being able to stop speaking, or doing things without thinking through the possible consequences. Being impulsive can be useful, as well as problematic. Following an idea without thinking can sometimes work out well. However, it can also mean that there is insufficient planning for a difficult task which can increase danger and risk, for example by speeding in the car or buying things that aren't affordable.

I find it difficult to....	I can try this.....
Not say the first thing that comes into my head	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Let others know that I find this difficult#▪ Prepare for particular situations/conversations (talk it through with someone I trust)▪ Practice self-talk, tell yourself "Stop/Think")
Wait my turn (and can lose my temper	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Use something to distract me, e.g., phone, or fidget (with keyring or bracelet, for example)▪ Really focus on something I can see. Think about what it looks like, feels, smells and sounds like, to distract me
Stop buying things I can't afford.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Don't shop when hungry or tired▪ Note to self on laptop/PC etc, e.g., "STOP – before I buy, do I need this? Can I afford this?"

Top Tips to help with impulsiveness from people who find this difficult:

- Have a discrete distraction tool (e.g., fidget toy or a smart phone). Especially useful in formal situations e.g., a meeting.
- A fidget toy or object can be a pen top, a key ring, lump of blue tac, a bracelet/wrist band, elastic band – something that you can keep in your pocket for when you need it.



- Exercise such as fast walking, running, rock climbing – every day at the start of the day and outside if possible.
- Don't go to shops or on-line to buy stuff when hungry or tired.
- Talk to someone you trust about what you think you do or say without thinking that makes problems for you - to help them and you know what is difficult for you.
- **Before** you make big decisions e.g., buying something:
 - Try to talk it through with someone you trust
 - Try to wait 24 hours **before** making a big decision and then see how you feel
- Remember to tell yourself to “**stop**” and ask yourself “**why am I doing this?**”

Time management and organisation

Adults with ADHD often find managing time and being organised challenging. It can be difficult to be aware of how much time is passing and how long activities will take. It can be easy to be distracted by anything that is going on around you, for example other people talking, the phone ringing or getting lost in daydreaming.

I find it difficult to...	I can try this...
Remember and be on time for appointments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Wall calendar on wall, or electronic calendar, e.g., on mobile phone (set a time to check it every evening for the next day so that it becomes a habit)▪ Set an alarm on my mobile phone to remind me when to get ready and when to leave house▪ Ask someone to text or call me with a reminder
Keep on top of paperwork	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Have a set day/time every week when I 'have' to go through paperwork put it on my calendar▪ Have bills sent electronically instead of on paper and file in electronic folders▪ Try colour coded/labelled filing/tray and clearly labelled folders for online information
Get things you need to do on time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Break down big tasks to achievable, small steps and write a list of small steps▪ Review lists every day and highlight in colour one thing that I 'have' to get done that day▪ Learn to say, "I'll get back to you" and set reminder to do that, then think it through to see if I have time to do it before agreeing to taking on another task.

Top Tips for managing time and being organised from other people who find this difficult:

- When getting ready to go out, time yourself with songs on your radio or phone, for example aim to be dressed by end of this song.
- Plan ahead the day before an appointment/need to be somewhere - count time backwards from appointments in detail to know when to set off, checking how long your journey will take e.g., times of buses (try a journey planner app or website) – and add 10 minutes and take something with you to do if you arrive early. Remember arriving early is OK.
- Set alarms on your phone to remind you to do something or leave house now.
- Have set places in your home where you keep things such as keys, for example on a key hook by the door where you will see it.
- Be aware of saying or thinking “I will ‘just’ do something” because you think you have time to do it. **Stop** and **ask** yourself, “Is this what I need to do now and do I have enough time to do this now?”
- Tell people you live or work with and who you trust that you have ADHD, and it is difficult for you to remember and ask them to keep reminding you of things you have agreed to do.
- Sync your e-mails and calendar on your phone.
- Have a notebook to write daily ‘to do’ lists and look back at previous days/months.
- Have a watch and use it to keep yourself aware of the time.

Tools for time management



Anxiety and mood

Sometimes, people with ADHD can feel worried and anxious. A history of saying the wrong thing, blurting out opinions, or being punished for interrupting or physical restlessness, can lead some adults with ADHD to feel anxious and even avoid people or certain situations.

Depression can appear in many forms and affect adults with ADHD in many different ways. Some depressed people are low in energy and enthusiasm and feel that life is difficult, or even not worth living. Others can feel on edge or even aggressive and still feel down and feel little hope for themselves. Many factors in a person with ADHD's life can lead to feeling sad or worried. Difficulties at school, trouble managing impulses, establishing and keeping social relationships, trying to cope with struggles such as poor memory or attention, can all make people feel very down and depressed. Poor concentration, disorganisation, sleep disturbances, and restlessness can all contribute to depression.

There is also evidence that some people with ADHD can find it difficult to control their emotions or experience sudden and extreme swings in their emotions e.g., being extremely happy one moment to being extremely sad or angry in the next moment, and that this has been the case since a young age.

If you feel your anxiety or depression is interfering with your quality of life, please see your GP and talk about it. There are some things you can do right now though – have a look at the table on the next page. The most important thing to remember is that you can do something about it – don't assume this is just the way it's going to be.

I find it difficult to...	I can try this...
Calm down	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Use relaxed breathing exercises. Follow these suggestions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Breathe from the belly - Breathe in slowly - Keep doing this for 2 minutes ■ Distract myself using the “5,4,3,2,1” trick <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify 5 things I can see and describe them - 4 things I can touch, and how they feel - 3 things I can hear, and what makes the sound - 2 things I can smell - 1 thing I can taste
Be positive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Talk to people I know and trust ■ Stay active. Exercise is a powerful way to improve my mood ■ Do things I enjoy, but don't overdo them ■ Challenge my thoughts. Would someone else I know have a different way of looking at things?

Top Tips to help you manage your mood and anxiety:

- First, it is important to recognise that you may have a problem and may need some help. There are stress and anxiety management groups in the community that you may be able to access. Please contact your GP in the first instance to find out more about them.
- Exercise (of any kind) and being out and about, is good for calming yourself down. Other things that may help calm you down are music, watching movies or distracting yourself from your worries and thoughts by speaking to a friend on the phone.
- It is important to know that worries and sad thoughts will pass. These feelings will not be there forever.
- Think of what others can do to help you and establish a plan with friends and family of how best to help when you are feeling anxious or depressed.
- Mindfulness and counselling can also be very helpful. You can be referred to Psychological Therapy services via your GP.

Attention and remembering

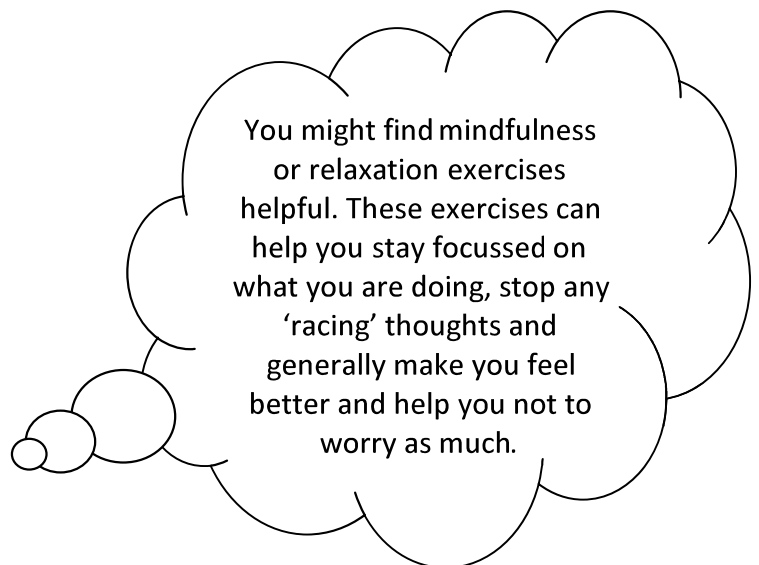
Being able to pay attention or concentrate is a key challenge for an adult with ADHD. It can be made worse by anxiety and low mood, but even when their mood is good many people with ADHD find sustaining attention particularly frustrating and difficult.

I find it difficult to...	I can try this...
Concentrate on a task for a long time	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Use some music (e.g., classical), without lyrics▪ Place cards saying 'Focus' in different places to help me stay focused on a task▪ Use alarms to tell me when to finish a task and when to start another one (e.g., when to have a break)▪ Try to make a list of what I will be working on. What are the most important things I need to get done today?
See all the detail in text, I often miss things	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Use bright colours to attract attention to important information (e.g., highlighters or post it notes to remind me of key words in a text or future appointments)
Do two things at once	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Remove posters or pictures that distract me▪ Switch screens off, if possible, to improve concentration, or move somewhere where it is not noisy▪ Use earplugs
Remember information	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Write things down on a notepad or the notes section of a mobile phone▪ Let my friends and family know that I struggle with my attention.

Top Tips to help you manage your attention and memory better from people who have similar difficulties:

- Speak your task out loud to help you stay focused.
- Have an item you can fidget or play with (e.g., stress ball).
- Keep things in the same place at home and work ('hot spot').
- Put things in places that will help you remember, e.g., on the floor in front of the door so you have to step on them to leave the flat.
- Baskets and plastic boxes can help you stay organised.
- Take photos of appointment cards or important information on your phone/iPad so you can refer to it later if you need it.
- Pack a bag for the next day the night before. Plan your day ahead and take time to prepare.

Use tools such as a checklist



Frustration and anger

Frustration and anger are common in adults with ADHD and these emotions can have negative effects on your life if not carefully managed. Having an argument at work can get you fired or arguing with your partner can strain your relationship with them and make you feel alone and angry with yourself. Sometimes, these outbursts are because this is the only way you know to express an emotion.

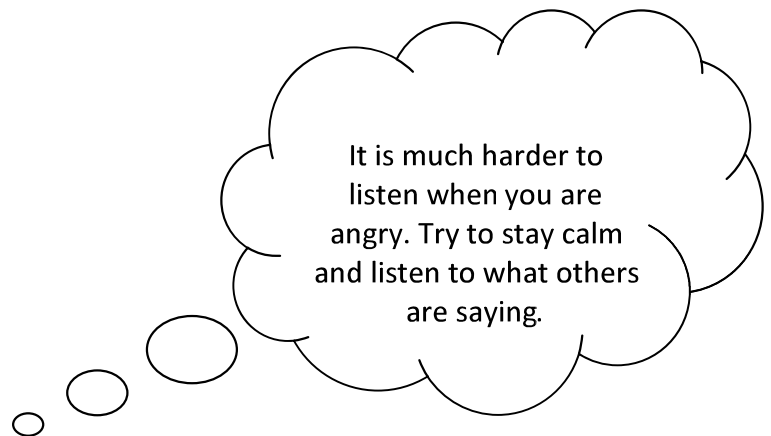
It is important to try to understand why we become angry: what our triggers are, what makes it better, what makes it worse.

I find it difficult to...	I can try this...
Control my temper	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Recognise the signs – am I clenching my fists, grinding my teeth or getting tense? If I am, it's time to take a slow breath out▪ Use relaxed breathing when you start to get wound up. Follow these suggestions:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Breathe from the belly- Breathe in slowly, but out more slowly- Keep doing this for 2 minutes
Avoid arguments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Agree a code word with important people that tells them when I need to step back from the argument▪ Ask myself, "What do I want from this discussion?"
Express myself when I'm angry or frustrated	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Ask people to give me a minute to think▪ Use "I feel..." to start a sentence so that what you are saying sounds more neutral rather than sounding critical.

Top Tips for managing your anger and frustration better:

- Try doing exercise (e.g., Yoga) and distracting yourself from the situation that is making you angry.
- Try some relaxation and breathing exercises or listening to soothing music.
- Tell yourself that sometimes others are helping, not just trying to wind you up.
- Sometimes, anger in ADHD can be positive as well, as it can be a motivator to achieve things, for example, it can overcome procrastination.
- It's OK to take a break and walk away to try and figure out your feelings.
- Agree with your family or partner how you would like them to help you when you get angry, have a plan.
- Stop when the argument is going nowhere. No need to get the last word.

It is important that you learn to recognise changes in your body/behaviours which are early warning signs for anger.



Home organisation and management

Adults with ADHD often find managing their routines and keeping on top of jobs at home such as shopping, cleaning and finances difficult. How you organise your home and space and the times and ways of doing things can help.

For example:

I find it difficult to...	I can try this...
Remember to pay bills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have bills sent electronically instead of on paper and set up standing orders ▪ Calendar on wall or electronic calendar, e.g., on mobile phone (check it every evening or the next day) ▪ Set an alarm to remind me on my mobile phone ▪ Ask someone to text or call me with a reminder
Have food in the house/eat regular meals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Meal planning for the week – write it down – have it on a board on the wall ▪ Shop once a week for the meals that I have planned ▪ Try on-line food shopping ▪ Have an emergency meal that I keep in the freezer e.g., fish, chips and peas.
To have clean clothes ready to wear	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have clear boxes/laundry baskets for dirty laundry e.g., one for white clothes and one for dark clothes ▪ Have a regular time when I do my laundry ▪ Have boxes/section dividers or set/labelled drawers for different types of clothing e.g., T-shirts, socks.

Top Tips for managing your home from other people who find this difficult:

- Clear plastic (see-through) boxes/baskets with shelves to put them on to store things that you need and if clear plastic, you can see what is in the box to help you find things. You can also label boxes/baskets.
- De-clutter your home – only keep what you really need in your house, so it is easier to find things. Ask someone you trust to help you throw out what you do not need by recycling it or taking it to a charity shop. This can be a big task so do it gradually, for example one cupboard at a time.
- Try and chill out about it more – home doesn't 'have' to be spotless to work in.
- Buy clothes that don't need ironing and only iron what is essential e.g., shirts that will be too creased if not ironed.
- Get your colours done (find out what colours suit you) and only buy T-shirts in those colours – helps laundry, shopping for clothes and you look nice in them.
- Key hooks for hanging keys near the door.
- Divide household tasks between everyone who stays in the house.
- Read bank statements and bills and letters that say 'important' (not at bedtime).
- Meal planning for week – means you don't buy unnecessary food, which you then throw out.

My Schedule

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
5 AM	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep	Sleep
6 AM	Bible	Bible	Bible	Bible	Bible	Breakfast or cushion	Breakfast or cushion
7 AM	Family Time	Family Time	Family Time	Family Time	Family Time	Family Time	Family Time
8 AM	Cushion	Work	Cushion	Work	Cushion	Outing or Family Time or Cushion	Church
9 AM	Homeschool	We Care	Grocery Shopping or Outing	Homeschool	Homeschool	Library or Outing	Church
10 AM	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Write Feels Like Home
11 AM	Work	Work	Work	Work	Work	Work	Family Time or Cushion
12 PM	Cleaning	Cleaning	Cleaning	Cleaning	Cleaning	Cleaning	Cleaning
1 PM	Cooking	Cooking	Cooking	Cooking	Cooking	Cooking	Cooking
2 PM	Exercise	Exercise	Exercise	Exercise	Exercise	Exercise	Exercise
3 PM	Dinner & Clean up	Dinner & Clean up	Dinner & Clean up	Dinner & Clean up	Dinner & Clean up	Dinner & Clean up	Dinner & Clean up
4 PM	Write	Write	Write	Write	Write	Write	Write
5 PM	Write	Write	Write	Write	Write	Write	Write
6 PM	Write	Write	Write	Write	Write	Write	Write
7 PM	Write	Write	Write	Write	Write	Write	Write
8 PM	Write	Write	Write	Write	Write	Write	Write
9 PM	Write	Write	Write	Write	Write	Write	Write
10 PM	Write	Write	Write	Write	Write	Write	Write

Joanne's house
Feels Like Home Blog.com

Lunch = Bible/devotional with my girls
Family Time = breakfast, play time, special time w/each, tv time
Bible = Bible study, devotional, prayer journal
Work = email, twitter, facebook

Remember you don't have to do all tasks at once. Make a list and do one at a time.

Problem solving

Difficulties with solving problems can be present in many adults with ADHD. You may struggle to recognise that a problem is approaching or act impulsively rather than think through possible solutions. You may find yourself worrying about more immediate or minor issues, rather than seeing the overall problem.

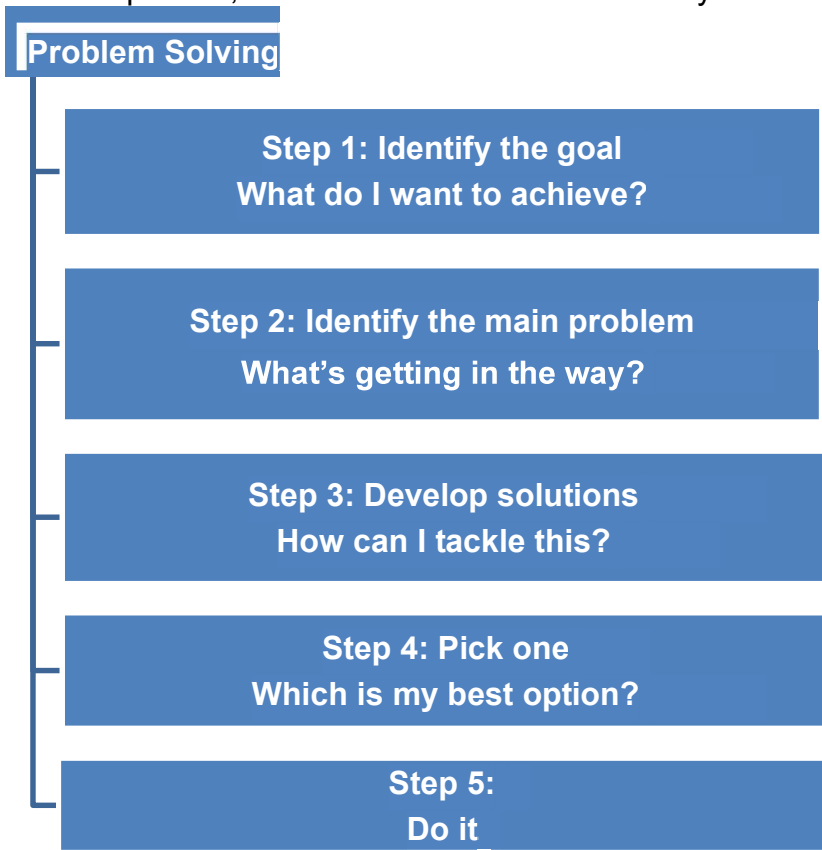
Difficulties with attention, memory, impulse control and inhibition can make problem-solving harder for people with ADHD. Feeling very angry, anxious or low in mood can also make it harder to come up with a range of solutions to any possible difficulty.

What is a problem?

A problem is anything that gets in the way of you achieving your goals.

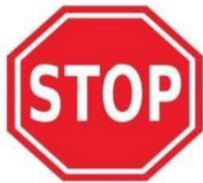
What can I do?

Problem solving can be made easier by following some basic rules: following these can help to reduce impulsive responses, reduce frustration and increase your chances of success.



Top Tips for problem solving from other people who find this difficult:

- Talk through a task out loud to keep you focused and know what you need to do next.
- Adults with ADHD can be very creative, and you can use this strength to help you come up with many possible solutions. The difficulty may be choosing one option and sticking to it.
- You may find it difficult to see the end picture and want things to be resolved and fixed 'now'. Some things may take time and you may need to stick with what you are doing to see an improvement. Don't give up.
- Make sure you find a quiet area where you can concentrate and really think through a problem and possible solutions.
- Be in the right head space – take mini brain breaks.
- Be aware of a tendency to focus on the small details and miss the bigger picture altogether. Maybe discuss your problem with a close friend or family member and go through the steps and solutions together.



Breathe in

Breathe out slowly....

.... Now think, “what is the problem?” ... write it down.

Sleep

For an adult with ADHD having enough sleep is important to help them cope with everyday life. Getting off to sleep and managing bedtime routines can be difficult. For example:

I find it difficult to...	I can try this...
Got to sleep	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Have a bedtime routine: how you unwind before sleep and when to start, how you arrange your bedroom▪ Have time to relax after having a shower/bath and getting ready for bed▪ Avoid caffeine or heavy meals just before bedtime
Wake up and get out of bed in the morning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Set two alarms on your phone. Take medication when first one goes off and place the second one somewhere I have to get out of bed to switch off▪ Use a dawn simulation lamp on a timer or if I live with someone else, ask them to open curtains/blinds just before the time I need to get up
Stay alert during the day and feel sleepy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Exercise e.g., go for a walk when feeling tired during day rather than taking a nap▪ Drink water regularly during the day▪ Take movement breaks rather than sitting for a long time.

Top Tips for getting enough sleep from other people who find this difficult:

Having a good bedtime routine

- Set an alarm (at set time e.g., 9.15pm or 10.30pm) to remind yourself to turn screen/computer off (**really** hard) or download a programme which turns your computer screen to warm or soft light at night or put yellow tinted glasses on.
- Turn lights off or dim them when watching TV or use a dimmer on the TV to gradually reduce the amount of light you are exposed to before going to bed.
- Relaxing routines such as: reading, mindfulness (listen to this on headphones), lavender oil / earplugs.
- Breathing – count 5 in / 6 out, practice ‘letting go’ of the day’s worries (you can use a notebook to write down worries).

Exercising during the day

- Get a friend or family member to do this with you to help with your motivation.

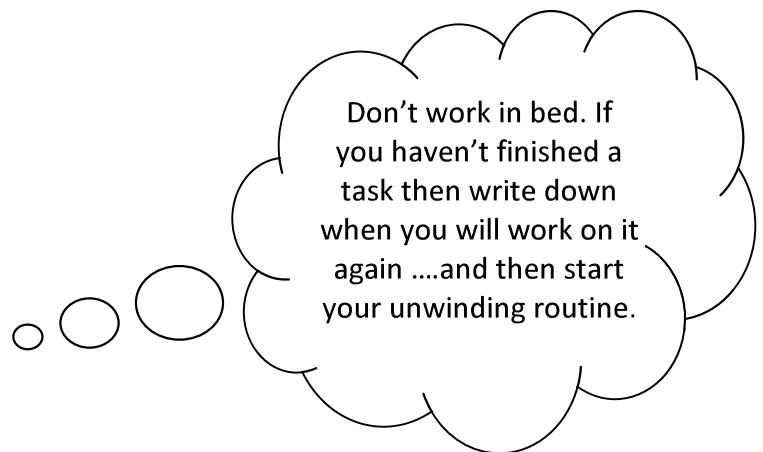
Managing light

- Room has to be **dark**, no lights on clock, etc – use black out blinds or eye mask.
- Dawn simulation alarm clock/Sunshine and Sunset lamp.

Speak to your GP about sleep medication options. You should also consider natural sources of Melatonin e.g., walnuts and cherry juice.

Reassure yourself

Sleep tracking app – for information and reassurance. I really **did** get 5½ hours sleep.



Social skills and relationships

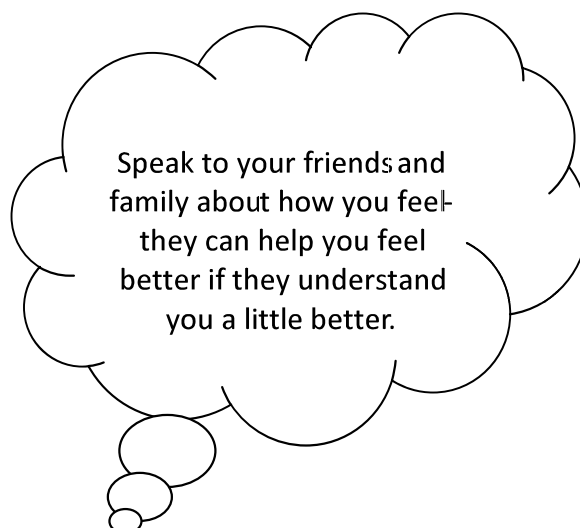
People learn how to be “social” as children by watching others and practicing with friends and family. This can be harder for children with ADHD as they struggle to concentrate and focus, and often do not see subtle social messages that others take for granted. Many children with ADHD are excluded or rejected from their peer groups, making it even harder to learn social skills. This lasts into adulthood, though most people get a bit better at this as they go along.

Feeling that having good social skills and relationships are a challenge is very common in adults with ADHD.

I find it difficult to...	I can try this...
Keep track of conversations in groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Be honest. Tell people when I haven't followed everything▪ Avoid busy environments where there is lots of distractions if I want to talk about something important
Keep promises	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Write down anything important, or make a recording on my phone or dates and times of arrangements▪
Keep relationships going	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ If I'm worried about this, talk to the person▪ Ask people what they need from me and be honest about what I can give.

Top Tips to help you manage your relationships and improve your social skills from other people who find this difficult:

- I find small talk difficult. Have a stock of general interest items for continuing the flow of conversation.
- Learn from others and discuss with a close friend or family member what the best 'rules' of social interaction are.
- Tell people you have ADHD and help them understand what this means.
- Remember to make eye contact with others.
- Take small time outs from conversation, use the 'toilet' as an excuse to get some fresh air.
- Remind myself not to interrupt, try and be aware of doing it.
- Let people know that you may go off on tangents and ask them to let you know if this happens.



Work and study

Adults with ADHD can have lots of good ideas and energy and can get on well with other people at work or college/university. They can also find it difficult to get work done, especially on time and may find it difficult to work with others. There are ideas and things that can be done to help.

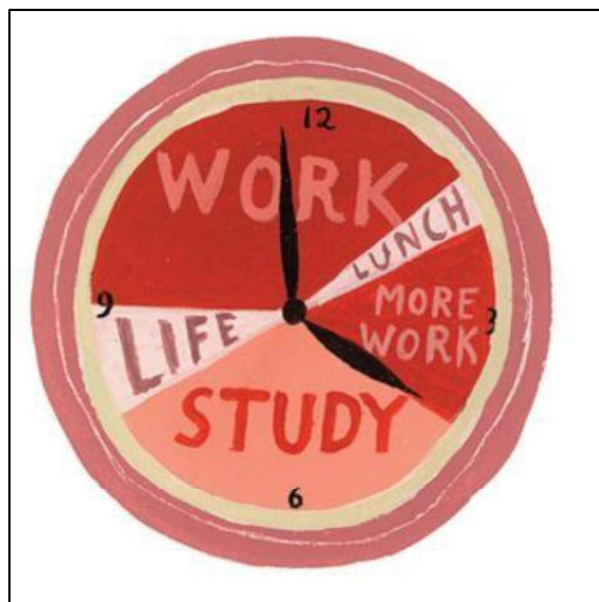
For example:

I find it difficult to ...	I can try this...
Concentrate at work or when studying especially when it is busy and noisy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use ear plugs to block out noise, to play music or background noise (e.g., www.noisli.com) ▪ Exercise such as fast walking or running – every day at the start of the day and outside if possible ▪ Speak to my Employer/Occupational Health/Tutor/Student Support Services – arrange to work alone in a quiet space
Keep on top of workload	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A 'to do' list for each day – 'post-it' notes on computer screen or whiteboard to write myself notes – in different colours (rub off notes when done) ▪ Breakdown big things to do into small goals, write down in a set notebook and tick off as I achieve them
Complete written work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reward myself with regular breaks every 30-45 minutes to stop and moves for 5-10 minutes ▪ Try using Information Technology (IT) to help such as Dragon Dictate – speech to text software, spell checks, predictive text. Speak with employer or support services at college/university about what they can offer to help ▪ Drink lots of water from a bottle with sports cap ▪ Eat healthy crunchy snacks such as apples, carrot sticks and chew gum.

Top Tips to help with studying and work from other people who find this difficult:

- Have a set workplace e.g., a desk and chair for work/study only.
- Don't try to do everything at once.
- Always keep a clearly labelled notebook with you to write down everything that you need to remember /that people ask you to do.
- Try a 'Body Double', 'Work/Study Buddy' and someone to tell what you are going to do and agree time to feedback and check back in with – e.g., Skype/just sound and no picture for a length of time e.g., three hours study.
- Choose someone that you trust at work and make them aware of your ADHD, so you have someone who understands what you find difficult.
- Put to-do lists or topic areas of study up on the wall – use colours to separate topics.
- Limit time on social sites.
- Leech block – plug-in for Firefox – also do lockdown for 36 hours to give yourself a whole day away from games.
- Short chunks and short-term goals so you can actually congratulate yourself for all the good stuff you have done rather than worry about what still has to be done. Limit your phone/screen time

Remember that you are always aiming for a balance



Living with ADHD

ADHD can be tiring, distressing and at times very challenging, however, it is also important to recognize that it can have benefits. Examples can include:

- Creative and innovative ways of thinking
- Taking a lead in a crisis situation where a fast response is good.
- Adaptability
- High levels of energy and enthusiasm
- A direct and honest approach to life.

In the right environment and with right support, people can thrive. The environment that you live and work in will have a considerable impact. Some situations may leave you stressed or not functioning at your best. Ask for advice. Think about what works for you and talk to other people about what can be done in terms of reasonable adjustments.

Acknowledging the condition and the impact it has on you and developing a balanced view of your strengths and your limitations is an important step. Be mindful that not everyone will automatically understand and acknowledge your challenges, especially if you are very skilled at masking. You may need to explain the condition to them and discuss how you manage it and how they can help.

In summary

Living with ADHD has advantage and disadvantages but should not be seen as a barrier to living a life that you would like to lead.

Additional Helpful Resources

1. General ADHD

Online support groups:

- **AADD-UK** online forum [AADD-UK | The site for and by adults with ADHD](#)
- **UK Adult ADHD Network** <http://www.ukaan.org/support-groups.htm>
- **Procrastination Station** [Home - Procrastination Station](#)
- **The Scottish ADHD Coalition**
<https://www.scottishadhdcoalition.org/>

2. Money Management and Impulsive Buying

- **Money Advice Service** www.moneyhelper.org.uk Tel: 0800 015 4402
- **National Debtline** www.nationaldebtline.org Tel: 0808 808 4000
- **Money Saving Expert** www.moneysavingexpert.com
- **Turn2Us (benefit advice)** www.turn2us.org.uk
- **Citizens Advice** www.citizensadvice.org.uk
- **Benefits, financial support, tax credits** www.gov.uk/browse/benefits
- **Step Change** www.stepchange.org/debt-remedy

3. Anxiety & Mood

Crisis/emergency contacts:

- **Breathing Space:** Free, confidential phone and web-based service
Website: www.breathingspace.scot **Tel:** 0800 83 85 87
- **Samaritans:** Confidential emotional support, 24 hours a day for people who are experiencing feelings of distress or despair, including those which may lead to suicide. You don't have to be suicidal to call. They are here for you if you're worried about

something, feeling upset or confused. www.samaritans.org **Tel:** 0116 123 (24 hours a day)

- **Mental Health Assessment Service:** Emergency mental health assessment at Royal Edinburgh Hospital **Tel:** 0131 286 8137
- **Edinburgh Crisis Centre:** Offers advice and emotional support for people currently experiencing a mental health crisis. They also offer a text service for people who don't feel able to talk www.edinburghcrisiscentre.org.uk Text 24 / Support 07974 429075
- **NHS Inform:** CBT (Cognitive Behavioural Therapy)-based self-help booklets to print/download www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/mental-health/mental-health-self-helpguides/anxiety-self-help-guide
- **Living Life to the Full:** Online CBT course www.lltf.com
- **ithrive:** Directory of mental health services in Edinburgh <https://ithriveedinburgh.org.uk/#>

4. Relationship / Family Support:

- **Couple Counselling Lothian** www.cclothian.org.uk
- **Relationships Scotland** www.relationships-scotland.org.uk **Tel:** 0345 119 2020
- **Social anxiety self-help: NHS Inform** www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/mental-health/mental-health-self-helpguides/social-anxiety-self-help-guide

5. Frustration and Anger

Courses:

- **Alternatives to Violence Project** – 3-day courses on building self-esteem, communication methods and resolving conflicts www.avabritain.org.uk

Self-help resources:

- **NHS Inform:** CBT-based self-help booklets to print/download, including one on anger www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/mental-health/mental-health-self-helpguides/problems-with-anger-self-help-guide/

Domestic violence and anger: If anger or frustration leads to violence, these organisations may be of help:

- **Respect** (confidential helpline for people with concerns about their own anger and for male victims of abuse) [Respect | Home](#)
 - Concerns about own anger helpline **Tel:** 0808 802 4040 (Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm)
 - Male victim's helpline **Tel:** 0808 801 0327 (Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm)

6. Sleep

- **The Sleep Charity:** Whether you're looking for information on choosing a mattress, buying a bed, or want tips for a better night's sleep. The Sleep Council promotes the benefits to health and wellbeing of a good night's sleep and the importance of buying a good bed. <https://thesleepcharity.org.uk/> Tel: 01302 751 416
- **Royal College of Psychiatrists** www.rcpsych.ac.uk/mental-health/problems-disorders/sleeping-well
- **Sleep Scotland:** A charity providing support to families of children and young people with additional support needs and severe sleep problems. www.sleepscotland.org/

7. Work and study

- **Noisli** (background noise and colour generator) www.noisli.com
- **Lothian Work Support Services** (Occupational Health service for self-employed people and employees of small businesses) [Lothian Work Support Services – NHS Lothian | Our Services](#) Tel: 0131 537 9579 [Employability in Scotland | Supporting the employability sector in Scotland](#) Email: EmployabilitySG@gov.scot
- **Disability support in higher education** [Into Higher Education | Disability Rights UK](#)

8. Addictions

- **Alcoholics Anonymous** www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk Tel: 0800 91177 650
- **Narcotics Anonymous** www.ukna.org Tel: 0300 999 1212
- **GameCare** (problem gambling charity) www.gamecare.org.uk Tel: 0808 8020 133
- **Gamblers Anonymous UK** www.gamblersanonymous.org.uk
- **Sex Addicts Anonymous UK** <https://saauk.info/> Tel: 07766 075247
- **ADDitude Strategies and Support for ADHD & LD** [ADDitude - Strategies and Support for ADHD and LD - New Hampshire Family Voices](#)

• Useful Books:

- You mean I'm not Lazy, Stupid or Crazy: A Self-Help Book for Adults with Attention Deficit Disorder by Kate Kellp and Peggy Ramundo. A book by ADD adults for ADD adults, practical help and moral support to adults who are struggling to understand them.

- *ADD and Success* by Lynn Weiss. A book about successful people with ADD – “understanding and embracing your ADD character to help you to lead a more enjoyable and productive life”.
- *Driven to Distraction* by Ed Hallowell & John Ratey. A book written by two American psychiatrists who themselves have ADHD.
- *It's Not Personal!: A Guide to Anger Management* by A J Katz
- *Managing Anger: Simple Steps to Dealing with Frustration and Threat* by Gael Lindenfield
- *Overcoming Insomnia and Sleep Problems: A self-help guide using cognitive-behavioural techniques* by Colin Espie
 - This teaches how to ensure your bedroom encourages a good night's sleep; how to develop good pre-bedtime routines; how to deal with a racing mind; and how to relax. It helps in establishing a new sleeping and waking pattern. It teaches us how to make effective use of sleeping pills and to deal with special problems including jet lag and sleepwalking. ○ www.overcoming.co.uk