

PRACTICAL ADVICE FOR COPING WITH ADHD IN ADULTHOOD

- Take ADHD medication for school/work days (or more often).
- Find a “coach” or “mentor” (for just 15 minutes per day).
- Meet with this person two or three times per day for 5 minutes to review your progress toward your goals that day.
- Cross-temporal accountability is the key to success.
- Identify an “ADHD liaison” at work or at college disability services, and use this person’s services frequently.
- Use a daily assignment calendar or journal—write everything (!) you need to do here, in one place, and carry it with you always.
- Use daily or weekly behavior report cards that supervisors can grade you on for frequent review of your work.
- Use word processing rather than handwriting for lengthy reports.
- Tape-record important lectures or meetings.
- Get any extra written notes, curriculum materials, or other documents to help you remember the contents of meetings and classes.
- Get notebook-organizing systems, day planners, and/or personal data assistants (Palm Pilots, Blackberries).
- Schedule harder classes/meetings/work in morning hours, when you are fresher and more attentive.
- Alternate required but boring work or courses with enjoyable work or elective classes.
- Extra time on timed tests may not work or may not be enough; no evidence has shown to date that it helps those with ADHD. It’s better to have distraction-free test settings.
- Exercise before exams or boring classes or meetings.
- Use continuous note taking to boost concentration in dull classes or meetings.
- Wear a tactile cueing device, the MotivAider (available at <http://addwarehouse.com> under “Training”), to frequently reprompt your alertness or self-awareness and your focus on your goal.
- Learn “SQ4R” for reading comprehension of any lengthy reading to be done:
 - First, survey the material and draft questions.
 - Then read, recite, write, and review after each paragraph.

(cont.)

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- Find a peer, fellow student, or coworker who can tutor you in difficult subjects.
- Work as part of a team with more organized people.
- Find “fall-back” coworkers or college classmates (with whom you swap phone, e-mail, and fax numbers) for when you may have lost or missed assignments, so you can get them when away from work or class.
- Attend after-class (or after-work) help sessions whenever given.
- Schedule faculty or supervisor review meetings often—every 3–6 weeks (not at the end of the grading period).
- Watch the caffeine and nicotine use—these might help your attention at first, but adults with ADHD are more prone to overuse them and become dependent on these substances.
- Try to better manage your use of other legal substances like alcohol, and avoid illegal substances entirely.
- Develop regular exercise patterns (three or more times per week) for increased attention, better health, better stress management, and so on.
- Get counseling and information about ADHD.
- Consider cognitive-behavioral therapy to help you develop more constructive self-statements.
- Get advice, assistance, and books on time management and organizing (consult specialists in this area, if available).
- Make yourself publicly accountable to others more often for personal goal-setting and self-change programs (diet, weight loss, saving money, managing finances, social conduct, etc.).
- Get vocational assessment and/or career counseling, to obtain a better fit between you and your job setting.
- Get consultation by a professional to your employer, as needed (for protections and accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act).
- Get marital or family counseling if needed.
- Get treatment for other disorders if needed (depression, anxiety, etc.).
- Get substance abuse treatment if needed.
- Got a problem to solve? Try the following with a sheet of paper and a pencil:
 - Six steps to effective problem solving:
 1. Define the problem: Write it down, and keep on task.
 2. Generate a list of all possible solutions. No criticisms are permitted at this stage.
 3. After all solutions are listed, briefly critique each possibility.
 4. Select the most agreeable option.
 5. Make this a behavior contract (sign it).
 6. Establish penalties for breaking the contract.