

10 top tips: ADHD and getting organised



ADHD & GETTING ORGANISED

Welcome

Let's get real.

Our society isn't designed for people with ADHD, and neither are 'standard' organising systems.

I'm Zoë and I run Scotland's leading decluttering and home organisation company LIFE / EDIT. During the 8 years we have been supporting people to fall back in love with their homes, we have worked with hundreds of people with ADHD.

This resource is designed for people with ADHD who want to start making the change to a more organised and less stressful home environment.

If you like what you see here, check out our socials and stay in touch.



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A note to start:

This is aimed at people with ADHD who feel stressed about their home, their clutter and the way it makes them feel.

If you are sick of:

- not being able to find anything
- being constantly late
- feeling hassled all the time
- losing things
- feeling shame when people come into your house

then this should be a starting block for you. It isn't intended to be a catch-all, but will give you some ideas about what to do to begin your decluttering journey.

Is this normal?

Yes!

ADDitude magazine did a survey of 1885 people with ADHD and:

- 60% said they were dissatisfied with their home organisation / decluttering skills
- 30% said clutter/home disorganisation causes them the most stress in life
- only about 1% said they didn't experience trouble in this area

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Tip 1: Stop trying to buy your way out of the problem

People with ADHD often love love LOVE shopping and impulsive or big purchases can cause a dopamine rush.

Before running to the shops for shiny storage boxes and 'must have' organisation solutions, be honest by asking yourself: 'is this really going to fix my issues?'

If you buy without decluttering you will be left with the storage AND the clutter, and you'll have used your energy on shopping so run out of ability to declutter.

Rule 1: Decluttering is always first.

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Tip 2: Let's bodydouble!

Body doubling is a way of doing tasks alongside another person or other people that can help you to stay focused and motivated.

The person (usually a friend or coach) can be with you in person or virtually. Think of them as an accountability pal, or even just a cheerleader.

Things that feel big or overwhelming alone can feel lighter when somebody else is nearby.

For people with ADHD the hardest part of many tasks is starting them. Having someone with you means you don't avoid the starting and it's not as scary or impossible feeling. Give it a try!

Rule 2: You don't have to do it alone.



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Tip 3: Start small

You are overwhelmed because you're thinking about decluttering your entire house.

Stop.

You need to do something small: a drawer, just one.

Your brain is searching for dopamine, so if you tell it you are going to be finished when you've done one drawer, you will feel a sense of achievement when you've done that drawer.

Every time you complete a small area, you'll build motivation which is a great way to keep the momentum going.

Rule 3: slow and steady wins the race...

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Tip 4: Timers are your friend

Another way of combatting the overwhelm is to use timers.

Setting a timer for even 5 minutes will get the dopamine going - a challenge against the clock.

Working in short, sharp bursts like this means you have much less chance of getting bored or overstimulated.

The short intervals help us break the task up into chunks; something that can be super hard to do. There is built-in anticipation and reward for the break you know is upcoming.

Rule 4: Time(r) is of the essence.



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Tip 5: Get some tunes on

Are you an ADHD-er who really loves to listen to music when doing a task?

Well, this is the scientific reason why:

Listening to music has been shown to increase dopamine in the striatum, enabling those with ADHD to stay focused on a task.

So if it helps, whack some music on when you're sorting out that first drawer

Rule 5: If music be the food of activity, play on!

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Tip 6: Focus on completion, not perfection

Try to let perfection go.

Processing too many details at once will leave you feeling overwhelmed.

Instead, focus on completing the task.

Also, try to be realistic about how much you can accomplish. Taking on more work than you can manage or designating too little time for each task will only lead to extra stress and pressure.

Rule 6: Perfection doesn't exist.



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Tip 7: Make Room for Rewards

One fantastic way to boost your motivation is by making sure you celebrate your achievements and reward yourself.

The reward doesn't have to be extravagant; you can simply treat yourself to something that helps you relax or brings you joy after completing a tedious or tricky chore.

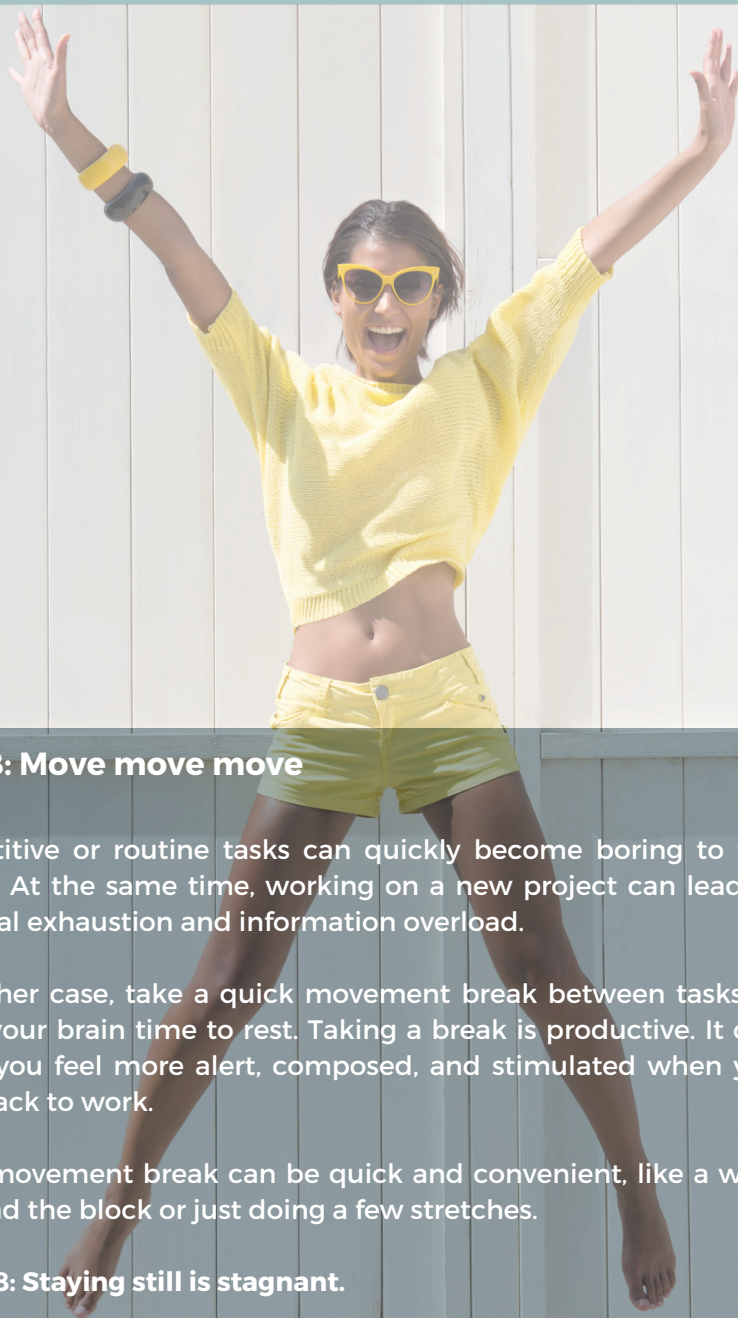
This can be as simple as enjoying your favourite chocolate, a phone call with a friend or a hot bath: whatever floats your ADHD boat.

Rule 7: This is hard, you deserve a treat.



**YOU
DESERVE
IT**

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Tip 8: Move move move


Repetitive or routine tasks can quickly become boring to the brain. At the same time, working on a new project can lead to mental exhaustion and information overload.

In either case, take a quick movement break between tasks to give your brain time to rest. Taking a break is productive. It can help you feel more alert, composed, and stimulated when you get back to work.

This movement break can be quick and convenient, like a walk around the block or just doing a few stretches.

Rule 8: Staying still is stagnant.

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Tip 9: Stop when you lose interest

Stopping before burnout means you're more likely to restart later and make it a habit.

It helps you keep the task free from emotions and it protects your brain from associating decluttering with feeling overwhelmed and burnt out.

It's okay if you leave the bag by the door for now. It's okay if you don't organise what you're keeping. It's vital to listen to what your body and mind are telling you.

Rule 9: The neurotypical rules of 'stop when it's done' do not apply

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Tip 10: Accept help

Sometimes you just gotta outsource. That's what experts are there for,

If you'd like some friendly, hands-on help in your home, that's exactly what we do at LIFE / EDIT. We work alongside you at your pace, helping to reduce the overwhelm whilst making sure the systems we set up are realistic for your life.

Rule 10: There's no shame getting the experts in.

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For inspirational before and afters, top tips and much more, stay in touch with us.

Meanwhile, happy decluttering!

