

Creative Solutions to Get Organized with Adult ADHD
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What does organizing with ADHD feel like?

Your ADHD will impact your ability to implement ADHD treatment

- Taking medication
- Getting to appointments
- Practicing skills

The Myth of the Solitary Hero: Catch-phrase: "I can do it MYSELF!"

- Completely self-reliant
- Needs no help from family members or professionals
- Uses no "strategies" or medication
- Doesn't have his therapist on speed-dial
- Also, leaps between buildings

The Hero Myth in Real Life

- "I don't need to write that down. I'll remember it later."
- Internal controls are unreliable, so you must use support outside yourself

Use **Outside** Help

- External reminders: Phone alarms, Timers in another room, Phone call Other People
- Professional Organizer with ADHD training
www.ChallengingDisorganization.org
www.napo.net
- ADHD Coach www.adhdcoaches.org
- Compassionate Clutter Buddy

What Are Your Expectations of Yourself?

- Your expectations need to match your current skills, support, and energy levels

Traditional vs. Creative Organizing

Traditional organizing + ADHD = unsustainable

- Tendency is to make things overly complex because a) that's stimulating b) that will prove you are a hero

Creative organizing + ADHD = functional

- Break the "rules" if it works better for you

Fight the tendency to overcomplicate by asking yourself, "How lazy can I be?"

- Reduce to one step whenever possible
- Reduce how much stuff you have
- Use OUTSIDE reminders

Make It Easier!

1) Traditional Organizing – Filing papers A-Z

Creative Organizing

- File essentials only (taxes, legal papers, account numbers & passwords, papers that you want to keep but couldn't replace)
- Use color grouping for hanging file folders (green = financial, red = legal papers, yellow = taxes)
- Use funny file names ("Papers to prove I'm alive")

2) Traditional Organizing – Elaborate laundry sorting/washing

Creative Organizing

- Do laundry by person without sorting colors. Wash in cold with a Shout Color Catcher
- Presort laundry using a dark bin for darks and a white bin for whites
- Don't buy clothes that need special care/dry-cleaning

3) Traditional Organizing Hanging all clothes & rotating seasons

Creative Organizing

- Use hooks for clothes that you will wear again
- Consider cubbies where you can see the clothes
- Don't expect yourself to rotate closets unless you've successfully done it
- Have fewer clothes

Liven It Up to Help Remember

- Humor
- Songs
- Dance
- Mantras
- Unusual associations
- Create a theme or metaphor

Keep a "First Aid for My Brain" Memo on Your Smartphone

What good are techniques if you can't remember them? Use a memo on your phone to track the things that work for:

- Getting started
- What helps you pay attention
- What to do if you get off track
- Then the only thing to remember is to look on your phone!

Seven Ways to Activate

- Talk to yourself out loud until you get where you need to be
- Try the 50/10 technique
- Race against your timer
- Fake it till you make it -- "Acting!"
- Phone a friend
- Roll, drop, and hop
- Set an alarm in a different room

Overcome Decision Paralysis

- Give yourself some room to make mistakes
 - Set a \$ amount for replacement
 - Could you get it again if you needed it?
 - Trust Your Instincts
- Get advice from a friend
- What's your recipe for decision-making?



Recipe **Decision card for my clothes** **Ingredients**

from: _____

servings: _____ prep time: _____

Directions:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ripped clothes/Stained clothes	Donate to Goodwill as rags
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Clothes more than 1 size too small	Donate to Goodwill
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Clothes that are ugly/out of style	Donate to Goodwill
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Clothes I thought I would like but don't	Give to Janie who is my size
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Clothes that don't fit my lifestyle	Donate suits to jobs program
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Clothes that fit & I like	Put back in closet/drawers
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Clothes 1 size smaller than I like	Store on rack in basement
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Special memory clothes	Pick best, then store in my <u>memory</u> box in the basement

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Three Strategies to Stay on Task

- 1) Use post-its and timers
- 2) Park your random thoughts
- 3) Get help from someone knowledgeable about ADHD

Why is Help So Important?



What's a "Body Double"?

- Anchors person to a task
- Sets a specific time and day to do it
- May or may not actually help with the task

Psychosocial Skills training such as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for ADHD combined with medication is more effective than medication alone

- *Mastering Your Adult ADHD*, S. Safren, et. al.
- *Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy for Adult ADHD: Targeting Executive Dysfunction*, M. Solanto

What Undermines Success

- Implementing skills training willy-nilly
 - Build basic calendaring skills and task tracking/prioritizations - 1 calendar!
- Overly negative responses AND Overly positive responses

Reinforce Skills

"Repetition is the key to helping adults with ADHD learn new skills that will ultimately become more habitual" *Mastering Your Adult ADHD*, S. Safren, et. al.

What's Your Next Step?

Even heroes need support. Use lists, alarms, timers, other people, and anything that works to help you function in your life.

- Break the "rules" and be creative if that helps
- Simplify tasks to one step whenever possible
- Reduce the stuff you have to manage
- Keep a "first aid for my brain" strategy list on your smartphone
- Make a recipe for decision-making
- Use a supportive helper for sorting, getting started and staying on track

Daily tips at <https://www.facebook.com/GreenLightOrganizing/>

Search "Simplify in 2018 with GLO" And request to join.