

executive functions
WORKBOOK



Executive Functions
workbook



welcome

Congratulations on taking the first step towards understanding and nurturing your executive functions. In this journey, you'll explore the amazing capabilities of your brain and discover practical strategies to unleash your true potential.

Think of your executive functions as your very own set of superpowers. They are the superhero abilities that help you plan, prioritize, stay focused, manage time, control impulses, and adapt to new situations. Just like any superhero, you have the power to harness and strengthen these skills, enabling you to navigate the complexities of daily life with confidence and ease.

Throughout this workbook, we'll explore various executive functions, such as impulse control, flexible thinking, working memory, organization, task initiation, planning, emotional control, and self-monitoring. Each section will offer valuable information and activities to help you understand these functions and identify areas where you can strengthen them.

Remember, this is not about perfection or achieving superhuman abilities overnight. It's about progress, growth, and embracing your unique strengths. Embrace the journey, embrace your inner superhero, and get ready to unlock the full potential of your executive functions.

So, are you ready to embark on this adventure? Grab a pen, an open mind, and let's dive into the world of executive functions together. Get ready to unleash your superpowers and discover the incredible impact they can have on your personal and professional life.

Let's unlock your superpowers and soar to new heights!



What are executive functions?

Have you ever wondered how your brain helps you stay organized, make decisions, and manage your daily life? Executive functions are a set of mental skills that enable you to plan, focus, solve problems, and achieve your goals.

In simpler terms, executive functions are like the "CEO" of your brain. They are responsible for helping you stay on track, think critically, and make wise choices. These skills are essential in various areas of your life, such as school, work, relationships, and personal growth.

Executive functions are like the "CEO" of your brain.

To better understand executive functions, we can break them down into different abilities. Impulse control allows you to resist distractions and make thoughtful decisions. Working memory helps you hold information in your mind while completing tasks. Planning and organization assist you in setting goals and managing your time effectively. Emotional control enables you to manage your emotions and respond to situations in a balanced way.

The exciting part is that executive functions are not fixed traits. Just like any other skill, they can be developed and strengthened over time with practice and strategies. By improving your executive functions, you can enhance your focus, productivity, and overall well-being.

In this workbook, we will explore each executive function in more detail and provide practical tips and exercises to help you enhance and leverage these skills in your daily life. So, get ready to embark on a journey of self-discovery and empowerment as we unravel the fascinating world of executive functions together!

KEY EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS

Organization

Structuring and arranging information or physical space in a systematic and orderly manner. It encompasses maintaining order, categorizing items, and creating systems to create efficiency and productivity.

Impulse control

Refers to the ability to resist immediate impulses or urges and make thoughtful, deliberate choices. It involves pausing before acting, considering consequences, and maintaining self-control in various situations.

Working memory

Holding and manipulating information in real-time to perform tasks. It enables individuals to remember and mentally work with information, such as following instructions, organizing thoughts, and solving problems.

Self-Monitoring

Being aware of thoughts, feelings, and actions. It includes the ability to evaluate and regulate performance, behavior, and progress towards goals. Self-monitoring helps individuals make adjustments and maintain focus.

Emotional control

Involves effectively managing and regulating emotions. It encompasses the ability to recognize, understand, and appropriately respond to emotions, avoiding impulsive or disproportionate reactions.

Flexible thinking

Adapt and adjust thoughts and behaviors in response to new information or challenges. Ability to consider alternative perspectives, generate creative solutions, and shift strategies when necessary.

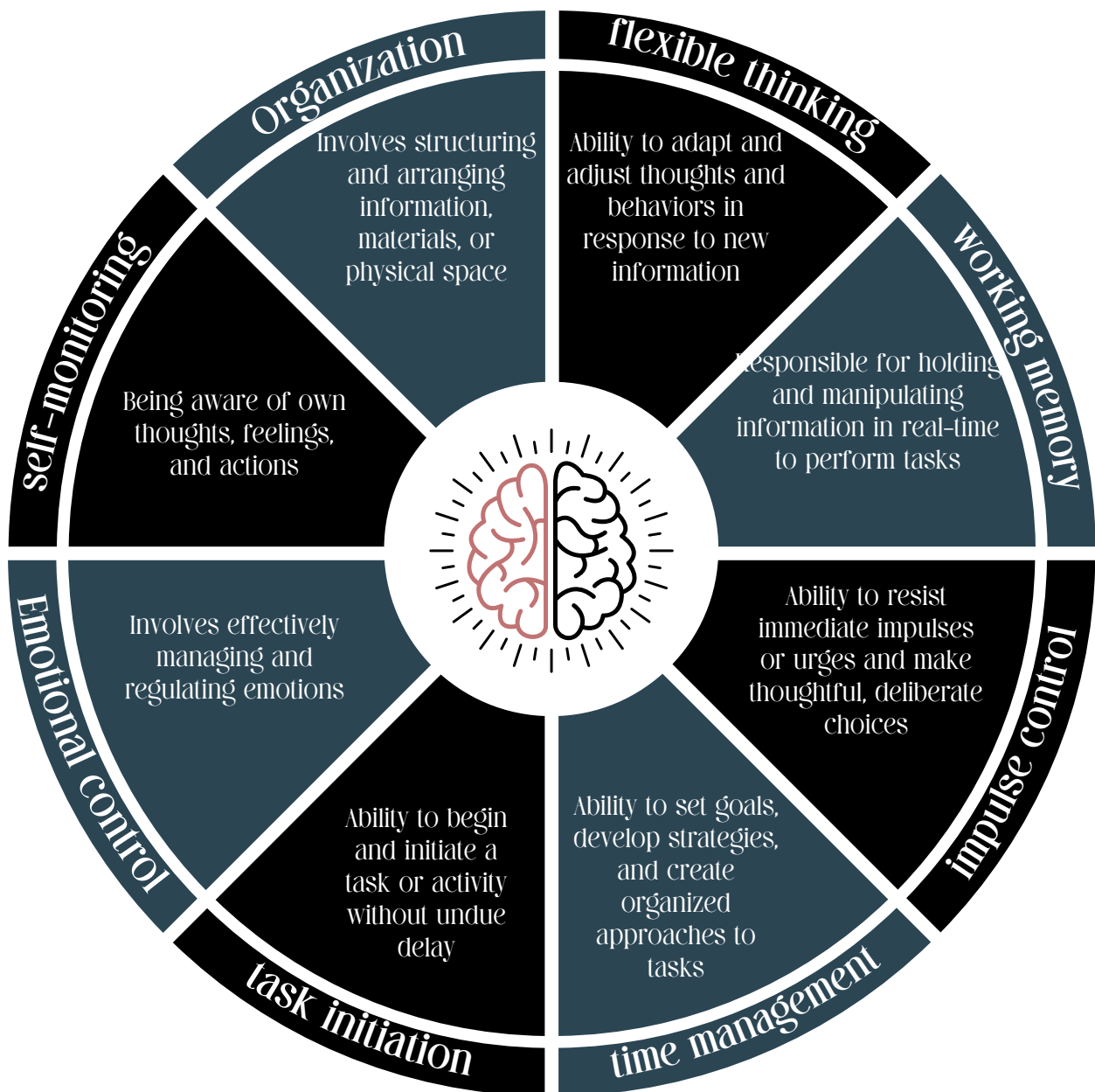
Time management

Ability to set goals, develop strategies, and create organized approaches to tasks. It involves breaking down tasks into smaller steps, allocating resources effectively, and determining the order of importance.

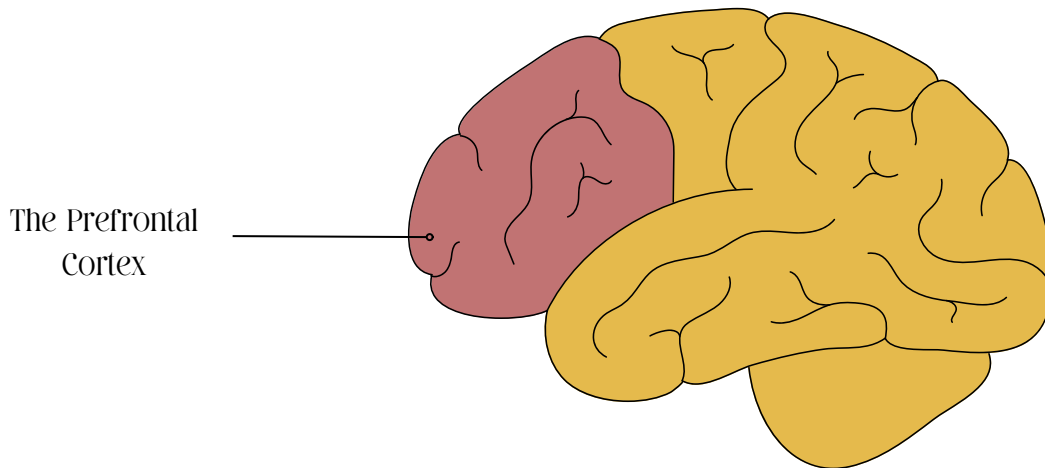
Task Initiation

Refers to the ability to begin and initiate a task or activity without undue delay. It involves overcoming procrastination, overcoming the resistance to start, and taking the first steps towards completing a task.

EXECUTIVE FUNCTION WHEEL



THE PREFRONTAL CORTEX



The brain region primarily associated with executive functions is the prefrontal cortex.

The prefrontal cortex is located in the frontal lobe of the brain, just behind the forehead. It is divided into different regions, each playing a specific role in executive functions. The two main areas are the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex (DLPFC) and the anterior cingulate cortex (ACC).

The DLPFC is involved in working memory, mental flexibility, reasoning, and problem-solving. It helps us hold information in mind, manipulate it, and use it to guide our actions. For example, when you solve a complex problem or plan your day, the DLPFC is actively engaged.

The ACC, on the other hand, is associated with monitoring and detecting errors, resolving conflicts, and exerting control over impulsive behavior. It helps us stay focused on a task, regulate emotions, and make adjustments based on feedback. When you notice a mistake or switch your attention from one task to another, the ACC is at work.

These prefrontal regions are highly interconnected with other brain regions, allowing for information processing and coordination. They receive inputs from sensory areas, memory systems, and other parts of the brain, integrating information and providing top-down control over our behavior.

Executive functions develop over time, particularly during childhood and adolescence, as the prefrontal cortex undergoes significant maturation. However, the prefrontal cortex continues to play an essential role in executive functions throughout adulthood.

Executive Dysfunction

What is it?

Imagine that your brain is like the boss of your body. It's responsible for making decisions, planning, organizing, and keeping you on track. Well, executive dysfunction is when that boss, your brain, is having a bit of trouble doing its job effectively.

You know those moments when you have a to-do list, but you can't seem to get started? Or when you want to finish a project, but you keep getting distracted by random thoughts? That's a taste of executive dysfunction.

This can make it harder for you to stay focused, manage time, and set priorities. It might feel like you have a bunch of ideas swirling around in your head, but you struggle to turn them into action. It can be pretty frustrating!

Now, executive dysfunction isn't the same for everyone. It can show up in different ways. Some people might struggle with starting tasks, while others might have difficulty finishing them. Some people might find it hard to switch between activities or keep track of time. It's like your brain's coordination skills are a bit wonky.

It's important to remember that executive dysfunction isn't a personal flaw or laziness. It's more like a temporary glitch in the system. Sometimes, it can be linked to conditions like attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), autism spectrum disorder (ASD), or mental health issues.

The good news is that there are ways to manage executive dysfunction and make life a little easier. You can try breaking tasks into smaller, more manageable steps. Creating routines and using reminders can also be super helpful and finding strategies that work best for you is key. It might take some trial and error, but you'll get there!

Remember, you're not alone in dealing with executive dysfunction. Many people face similar challenges, and it's perfectly okay to ask for support when you need it. Whether it's from friends, family, or professionals, they can help you come up with strategies and cheer you on along the way.

So, be patient with yourself and celebrate your victories (no matter how small). You've got this!

EXECUTIVE DYSFUNCTION

What It Isn't

OCCASIONAL TASK-SWITCHING

Switching between tasks occasionally or adapting to new situations does not indicate executive dysfunction. It becomes a concern when task-switching difficulties are persistent and significantly impact daily functioning.

OCCASIONAL DISORGANIZATION

Brief periods of disorganization, such as having a messy desk or forgetting to complete a minor task, are common and do not necessarily suggest executive dysfunction. Everyone can experience temporary disorganization at times.

OCCASIONAL FORGETFULNESS

Forgetting occasional appointments or where you placed your keys does not necessarily indicate executive dysfunction. It is normal to have occasional lapses in memory.

OCCASIONAL EMOTIONAL UPS AND DOWNS

Experiencing a range of emotions and moods is a normal part of being human. It becomes concerning when emotional regulation difficulties are persistent and significantly impact daily functioning or relationships.

OCCASIONAL IMPULSIVE ACTIONS

Making impulsive decisions or acting on spontaneous desires occasionally is part of normal human behavior. It becomes problematic when impulsivity is persistent, uncontrollable, and interferes with important aspects of life.

Executive dysfunction refers to persistent difficulties in the cognitive processes related to executive functions. If you have concerns about executive functioning, it is best to consult with a healthcare professional or neuropsychologist for a comprehensive evaluation.

WHAT DOES EXECUTIVE DYSFUNCTION LOOK LIKE?

Read the scenarios below and check off the signs of executive dysfunction that you can identify in your everyday life.

1. Getting Ready in the Morning:

- Trouble initiating tasks, such as getting out of bed or starting to get dressed.
- Difficulty managing time and frequently running late.
- Forgetting steps in the morning routine.

2. Completing a task:

- Procrastinating on starting the task, even with a looming deadline.
- Struggling to prioritize tasks within the assignment.
- Getting easily distracted by unrelated thoughts or external stimuli.

3. Keeping Track of Personal Belongings:

- Frequently misplacing or losing items like keys, phone, or wallet.
- Forgetting to bring necessary items when leaving the house.
- Difficulty organizing personal spaces, like desks or rooms.

4. Managing Finances:

- Struggling to create and stick to a budget.
- Forgetting to pay bills or deadlines for financial obligations.
- Difficulty organizing and keeping track of receipts or important documents.

5. Planning an Event:

- Feeling overwhelmed by the complexity of the planning process.
- Struggling to prioritize tasks and create a timeline.
- Becoming easily sidetracked by researching irrelevant details.

6. Maintaining a Daily Schedule:

- Forgetting appointments or important dates.
- Difficulty transitioning between different activities or tasks.
- Feeling disoriented or losing track of time.

KEY EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS

These eight key executive functions collectively contribute to our ability to plan, prioritize, initiate, and carry out tasks effectively. Difficulties in any of these areas can impact daily functioning, academic performance, work productivity, and overall well-being.

Organization	Structuring and arranging information or physical space in a systematic and orderly manner. It encompasses maintaining order, categorizing items, and creating systems to create efficiency and productivity.
Impulse control	Ability to resist immediate impulses or urges and make thoughtful, deliberate choices. It involves pausing before acting, considering consequences, and maintaining self-control in various situations.
Working memory	Holding and manipulating information in real-time to perform tasks. It enables individuals to remember and mentally work with information, such as following instructions, organizing thoughts, and solving problems.
Self-Monitoring	Being aware of thoughts, feelings, and actions. It includes the ability to evaluate and regulate performance, behavior, and progress towards goals. Helps individuals make adjustments and maintain focus.
Emotional control	Involves effectively managing and regulating emotions. It encompasses the ability to recognize, understand, and appropriately respond to emotions, avoiding impulsive or disproportionate reactions.
Flexible thinking	Adapt and adjust thoughts and behaviors in response to new information or challenges. Ability to consider alternative perspectives, generate creative solutions, and shift strategies when necessary.
Time management	Ability to set goals, develop strategies, and create organized approaches to tasks. It involves breaking down tasks into smaller steps, allocating resources effectively, and determining the order of importance.
Task Initiation	Refers to the ability to begin and initiate a task or activity without undue delay. It involves overcoming procrastination, overcoming the resistance to start, and taking the first steps towards completing a task.

Executive function tips *impulse control*

- Practice mindfulness:**
Cultivate awareness of your thoughts, feelings, and impulses in the present moment. This can help create a space for conscious decision-making rather than impulsive reactions.

- Identify triggers:**
Pay attention to situations, environments, or emotions that tend to trigger impulsive behavior. Knowing your triggers can help you prepare and develop strategies to manage them effectively.

- Delay gratification:**
When faced with an impulse, try to delay acting on it. Count to ten, take a deep breath, or distract yourself momentarily. This pause can provide an opportunity to evaluate the impulse and make a more intentional choice.

- Create an impulse control toolbox:**
Create an impulse control toolbox: Compile a list of techniques, strategies, or reminders that you can refer to when faced with impulsive urges. This toolbox can include breathing exercises, self-affirmations, or lists of reasons to resist the impulse.

- Develop alternative coping strategies:**
Instead of giving in to impulsive urges, find healthier alternatives to cope with stress or emotions. Engage in activities like exercise, journaling, or deep breathing to redirect your focus and manage impulses in a constructive way.

Remember, these tips are general guidelines, and it's important to adapt them to your specific needs and preferences. Experiment with different strategies, and don't hesitate to seek support from professionals, such as therapists, coaches, or organizers, who can provide personalized guidance for managing executive functions and improving overall productivity and well-being.

Executive function tips

Organization

- Declutter your physical space:**
Start by decluttering and organizing your physical environment. Remove unnecessary items, create designated storage spaces, and establish systems for keeping items in order.

- USE calendars and reminders:**
Use calendars, planners, or digital reminder tools to keep track of important dates, appointments, and deadlines. Set reminders to prompt you to complete tasks or take necessary actions.

- Set up dedicated workspaces:**
Designate specific areas for different tasks or activities. Have a separate workspace for studying, working, or hobbies. This helps create a clear distinction and promotes focus and organization.

- Establish a system for incoming information:**
Develop a system for handling incoming information, such as emails, messages, or mail. Set specific times to review and respond to communications, and organize them accordingly.

- Regularly review and maintain:**
Set aside regular time to review and maintain your organizational systems. This includes decluttering, updating files, reassessing priorities, and making adjustments as needed.

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Executive function tips

Emotional Control

- Identify emotions:**
Practice self-awareness to identify and label your emotions accurately. Pay attention to the physical sensations, thoughts, and behaviors associated with different emotions.
- Validate your emotions:**
Recognize that all emotions are valid and have a purpose. Avoid judging or suppressing your emotions, as this can intensify them. Instead, acknowledge and accept your emotions without judgment.
- Take deep breaths:**
Deep breathing exercises can help activate the body's relaxation response and reduce emotional intensity. Take slow, deep breaths, focusing on the sensation of the breath entering and leaving your body.
- Engage in self-care:**
Prioritize activities that promote emotional well-being, such as exercise, practicing hobbies, spending time in nature, or engaging in relaxation techniques like meditation or journaling.
- Develop an emotional regulation toolkit:**
Identify coping strategies that help you regulate your emotions. This could include techniques like progressive muscle relaxation, listening to calming music, or using grounding exercises.

Remember, these tips are general guidelines, and it's important to adapt them to your specific needs and preferences. Experiment with different strategies, and don't hesitate to seek support from professionals, such as therapists, coaches, or organizers, who can provide personalized guidance for managing executive functions and improving overall productivity and well-being.

Executive Dysfunction tips

Task Initiation

- Break tasks into smaller steps:**
Divide larger tasks into smaller, more manageable steps. When you break tasks into smaller steps, this can make the overall task feel less overwhelming and make it easier to start.
- Set specific goals:**
Clearly define the objectives and outcomes you want to achieve with each task. Setting specific and achievable goals can provide clarity and motivation to initiate the task.
- Create a routine:**
Establish a consistent routine that includes designated times for starting tasks. Having a structured schedule can help train your brain to anticipate and initiate tasks more easily.
- Use visual cues:**
Place visual reminders or cues in your environment to prompt task initiation. This could be a sticky note, an alarm on your phone, or a visual representation of the task that serves as a visual trigger.
- Use positive reinforcement:**
Reward yourself for initiating tasks. Create a system of small rewards or incentives that you can give yourself upon starting a task. This can help create a positive association with task initiation.

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Executive function tips

Flexible Thinking

- Practice perspective-taking:**
Make an effort to see situations from different perspectives. Consider how others might perceive a situation or problem, and challenge your own assumptions and beliefs.
- Seek new experiences:**
Engage in activities that expose you to new ideas, cultures, or ways of thinking. This can broaden your perspective and help you become more adaptable and open-minded.
- Embrace uncertainty:**
Practice tolerating ambiguity and uncertainty. Recognize that not everything has a clear-cut solution or answer, and be comfortable with exploring different possibilities.
- Challenge rigid thoughts:**
Notice when you're thinking in black-and-white terms or holding onto fixed beliefs. Challenge these rigid thoughts by actively seeking alternative explanations or considering shades of gray.
- Engage in creative pursuits:**
Explore creative activities like drawing, writing, or brainstorming. These activities encourage flexible thinking by allowing you to generate multiple ideas and consider different approaches.

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Executive function tips

Working Memory

- Use external memory aids:**
Utilize tools such as calendars, to-do lists, sticky notes, or smartphone reminders to offload information from your working memory and rely on external cues for task management.

- Break tasks into smaller steps:**
Break down complex tasks or projects into smaller, more manageable steps. This can reduce the cognitive load on your working memory and make it easier to remember and execute each step.

- Use visual cues and organization systems:**
Create visual cues or use organizational systems to help you remember important information. This can include color-coding, labeling, or creating visual associations to aid in memory retrieval.

- Repeat and summarize information:**
When receiving or processing information, repeat key details out loud or in writing to reinforce memory encoding. Summarize information in your own words to solidify understanding and retention.

- Establish routines and habits:**
Establishing consistent routines and habits can help reduce the demand on your working memory. By automating certain tasks or activities, you free up cognitive resources for other memory-intensive activities.

Remember, these tips are general guidelines, and it's important to adapt them to your specific needs and preferences. Experiment with different strategies, and don't hesitate to seek support from professionals, such as therapists, coaches, or organizers, who can provide personalized guidance for managing executive functions and improving overall productivity and well-being.

Executive function tips

Self-Monitoring

- Increase self-awareness:**
Develop a greater understanding of your thoughts, behaviors, and actions by cultivating self-awareness. Pay attention to how you react in different situations and the impact of your behavior on yourself and others.
- Use self-reflection:**
Set aside time for self-reflection on a regular basis. Consider your goals, values, and the progress you are making. Reflect on your actions and their alignment with your desired outcomes.
- Establish personal benchmarks:**
Set specific, measurable benchmarks or goals for yourself. This allows you to monitor your progress and make adjustments as needed. Regularly assess how well you're meeting these benchmarks.
- Keep a journal:**
Maintain a journal to record your thoughts, emotions, and actions throughout the day. Reviewing your entries can provide valuable insights into patterns, triggers, and areas where self-monitoring is needed.
- Seek feedback:**
Request feedback from trusted friends, family, or colleagues regarding your behavior and how it impacts them. This external perspective can offer valuable insights and help you refine your self-monitoring skills.

Remember, these tips are general guidelines, and it's important to adapt them to your specific needs and preferences. Experiment with different strategies, and don't hesitate to seek support from professionals, such as therapists, coaches, or organizers, who can provide personalized guidance for managing executive functions and improving overall productivity and well-being.

Executive Dysfunction tips

Time-Management

- Set clear goals:**
Clearly define your short-term and long-term goals. Break them down into smaller, actionable steps to make them more manageable and create a roadmap for your actions.

- Use a planner or task management tool:**
Utilize a planner, digital calendar, or task management app to organize and prioritize your tasks. Write down deadlines, create to-do lists, and schedule specific blocks of time for different activities.

- Prioritize tasks:**
Determine which tasks are most important and prioritize them accordingly. Consider urgency, importance, and the potential impact of each task. Focus on completing high-priority tasks before moving on to lower-priority ones.

- Time blocking:**
Allocate specific blocks of time for different activities or tasks. Set aside dedicated periods for planning, working on specific projects, and taking breaks. Stick to the schedule as much as possible to enhance productivity and focus.

- Limit distractions:**
Minimize distractions and create a focused work environment. Turn off notifications on your phone, close unnecessary browser tabs, and find a quiet space where you can concentrate on your planning and prioritizing tasks.

Remember, these tips are general guidelines, and it's important to adapt them to your specific needs and preferences. Experiment with different strategies, and don't hesitate to seek support from professionals, such as therapists, coaches, or organizers, who can provide personalized guidance for managing executive functions and improving overall productivity and well-being.

Assessment

Impulse Control

This assessment helps identify difficulties in self-control, impulsivity, and managing immediate desires or distractions and highlights areas that may require attention or intervention.

	Yes	No
Do you often find it difficult to resist the urge to check your phone or social media during important tasks?		
Do you frequently make impulsive purchases without considering the long-term consequences?		
Do you tend to interrupt others while they are speaking or finish their sentences for them?		
Do you have difficulty waiting for your turn in conversations, lines, or group activities?		
Do you often act on immediate desires or impulses without considering the potential negative outcomes?		
Do you find it challenging to resist eating unhealthy foods, even when you're trying to maintain a healthy diet?		
Do you frequently engage in risky or dangerous activities without considering the potential consequences?		
Do you have difficulty controlling your emotions, leading to outbursts or impulsive reactions?		
Do you often find it hard to delay gratification and opt for immediate rewards instead?		
Do you struggle with resisting distractions when you need to focus on a specific task?		
Totals		

Count the number of "yes" responses. A higher score indicates potential issues with impulse control.

Assessment *Organization*

This assessment helps identify challenges in organizing physical spaces, managing tasks and responsibilities, and maintaining structured systems. It can highlight areas that may require attention or intervention.

	Yes	No
Do you frequently misplace important items, such as keys, documents, or personal belongings?		
Do you find it challenging to create and maintain a structured schedule or routine?		
Do you often feel overwhelmed by the number of tasks or responsibilities you need to manage?		
Do you have difficulty categorizing and sorting information or materials in a systematic way?		
Do you frequently forget deadlines or important dates unless they are explicitly reminded to you?		
Do you find it challenging to break down larger tasks or projects into smaller, manageable steps?		
Do you struggle to prioritize tasks effectively and often find yourself working on less important tasks instead?		
Do you frequently double-book appointments or meetings due to poor calendar management?		
Do you have difficulty maintaining a system for organizing digital files, emails, or documents?		
Do you often struggle to keep your physical spaces, such as your room or workspace, tidy and organized?		
Totals		

Count the number of "yes" responses. A higher score indicates potential issues with organization.

Assessment

Emotional Control

This assessment helps identify challenges in managing and regulating emotions effectively. It can highlight areas that may require attention or intervention.

	Yes	No
Do you often have difficulty managing or controlling strong emotions such as anger, frustration, or sadness?		
Do you frequently react impulsively or emotionally without considering the potential consequences?		
Do you struggle to regulate your emotions and find it challenging to calm down when feeling upset?		
Do you frequently experience emotional outbursts or have difficulty keeping your emotions in check?		
Do you have difficulty bouncing back from setbacks or disappointments and tend to dwell on negative emotions?		
Do you often feel overwhelmed by stress or anxiety, leading to a loss of emotional control?		
Do you struggle to express your emotions in a constructive or appropriate manner?		
Do you frequently engage in behaviors such as emotional eating or substance use as a means of coping with emotions?		
Do you find it challenging to recognize and understand your own emotions and their underlying causes?		
Do you often experience mood swings or have difficulty maintaining emotional stability?		
Totals		

Count the number of "yes" responses. A higher score indicates potential issues with emotional control.

Assessment *Task Initiation*

This assessment helps identify challenges in starting tasks, overcoming procrastination, and initiating work effectively. It can highlight areas that may require attention or intervention.

	Yes	No
Do you often find it challenging to start tasks or projects, even when you know they are important?		
Do you frequently procrastinate or delay getting started on tasks until the last minute?		
Do you struggle to prioritize your daily tasks and decide which one to begin first?		
Do you frequently find yourself getting distracted or sidetracked before you can start a task?		
Do you have difficulty overcoming feelings of resistance or reluctance when starting new tasks?		
Do you frequently need external reminders or prompts to initiate tasks or get started with a project?		
Do you often struggle to transition from one task or activity to another smoothly?		
Do you find it challenging to initiate tasks that require sustained effort or motivation?		
Do you frequently experience a sense of inertia or difficulty getting "in the zone" when starting work?		
Do you often feel overwhelmed by the thought of beginning a complex or demanding task?		
Totals		

Count the number of "yes" responses. A higher score indicates potential issues with task initiation.

Assessment

Flexible Thinking

This assessment helps identify rigidity in thinking, adaptability, and openness to new ideas and highlights areas that may require attention or intervention.

	Yes	No
Do you find it challenging to consider alternative viewpoints or perspectives when discussing a topic?		
Do you often get stuck on one way of doing things and have difficulty adapting to changes?		
Do you struggle to come up with multiple solutions when faced with a problem?		
Do you find it difficult to switch between different tasks or activities smoothly?		
Do you tend to feel frustrated, overwhelmed or anxious when things don't go as planned?		
Do you have difficulty adjusting your plans or strategies when faced with unexpected obstacles?		
Do you find it challenging to brainstorm creative ideas or think "outside the box"?		
Do you prefer routine and have difficulty embracing new or unfamiliar situations?		
Do you tend to resist suggestions or feedback from others, preferring to stick to your own ideas?		
Do you find it difficult to let go of past failures or mistakes and move forward with new approaches?		
Totals		

Count the number of "yes" responses. A higher score indicates potential issues with flexible thinking.

Assessment

Working Memory

This assessment helps identify challenges in holding and manipulating information in working memory and highlights areas that may require attention or intervention.

	Yes	No
Do you often forget important details or instructions shortly after receiving them?		
Do you find it challenging to hold and manipulate multiple pieces of information in your mind simultaneously?		
Do you frequently need to write down or make reminders for even simple tasks or appointments?		
Do you have difficulty remembering and following multi-step directions or instructions?		
Do you find it challenging to mentally calculate or perform arithmetic operations without relying on external aids?		
Do you often struggle to recall names, dates, or other specific pieces of information?		
Do you have difficulty recalling relevant information during conversations or discussions?		
Do you find it challenging to keep track of time and manage your schedule effectively?		
Do you frequently lose or misplace items due to difficulty in remembering where you put them?		
Do you have trouble concentrating on a task when you need to hold and process information in your mind simultaneously?		
Totals		

Count the number of "yes" responses. A higher score indicates potential issues with working memory.

Assessment

Self-Monitoring

This assessment helps identify challenges in self-awareness, self-evaluation, and the ability to adjust behaviors based on feedback and situational demands. It can highlight areas that may require attention or intervention.

	Yes	No
Do you often struggle to recognize and identify your own thoughts, feelings, and behaviors in the moment?		
Do you frequently find it challenging to assess and evaluate your own performance or progress in tasks or activities?		
Do you have difficulty noticing when you make mistakes or errors and correcting them promptly?		
Do you often receive feedback from others about behaviors or actions that you were not aware of at the time?		
Do you struggle to adjust your behavior or approach based on the specific demands or requirements of different situations?		
Do you find it challenging to maintain self-awareness and consistently reflect on your own thoughts, feelings, and actions?		
Do you frequently lose track of time or get absorbed in tasks without monitoring how they are progressing?		
Do you have difficulty recognizing and adjusting your strategies when faced with obstacles or difficulties?		
Do you struggle to notice and modify unhelpful habits or patterns that may be hindering your progress?		
Do you frequently experience a lack of awareness or understanding of how your behaviors impact others?		
Totals		

Count the number of "yes" responses. A higher score indicates potential issues with self-monitoring.

Assessment

Time Management

This assessment helps further identify challenges in creating effective plans, prioritizing tasks, and managing time efficiently. It can highlight areas that may require attention or intervention.

	Yes	No
Do you often find it challenging to create a detailed plan or roadmap for completing a project or task?		
Do you frequently struggle to break down larger goals or tasks into smaller, actionable steps?		
Do you have difficulty estimating the time required to complete a task or project accurately?		
Do you frequently feel overwhelmed by the number of tasks or responsibilities you need to prioritize?		
Do you tend to focus on less important or low-priority tasks instead of the more crucial ones?		
Do you often find yourself running out of time or missing deadlines due to poor planning?		
Do you struggle to adapt your plans or adjust priorities when unexpected circumstances arise?		
Do you frequently feel disorganized or scattered, lacking a clear plan for your day or week?		
Do you often struggle to balance short-term tasks and long-term goals effectively?		
Do you frequently start tasks without a clear understanding of their importance or relevance?		
Totals		

Count the number of "yes" responses. A higher score indicates potential issues with time management.

ACTIVITY LOG

TIME	activity
06:00 - 08:00	
08:00 - 10:00	
10:00 - 12:00	
12:00 - 14:00	
14:00 - 16:00	
16:00 - 18:00	
18:00 - 20:00	
20:00 - 22:00	
22:00 - 24:00	
24:00 - 02:00	
02:00 - 04:00	
04:00 - 06:00	

ACTION PLANNING

The goal

Action steps	Date	Challenges	Impact/evidence
1			
2			
3			

Barriers and obstacles	Solutions to barriers

ACTION TABLE

This action table can help you identify all the things that are helping you to achieve your goals.

The goal:

Stop doing:	
Do less of:	
Keep doing:	
Do more of:	
Start doing:	

PROJECT PLANNER

Project description	Tools and resources
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Start date:	End date:	Budget:
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Milestones	Break it down	

TO DO

urgent

important

easy

can wait

THE POMODORO TECHNIQUE

Source: Francesco Cirillo



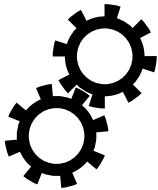
Decide on the task you need to do

This can be any task that you need to get done and something that will require your full attention.



Set timer to 25 minutes

Commit to spending 25 minutes on this task with no interruptions or distractions.



Work on task until timer rings

Spend the next 25 minutes immersed in the task.



Make a check on paper

This check shows you've successfully completed one session.



Take a 5 minute break

You can do anything here that's not related to the task: have a drink, stretch, take a short walk.



After 4 check marks take a 30 minute break

Now you can take a longer break. During this time your brain will assimilate the new information and be ready for your next session.

15-MINUTE PLANNER

morning	
5:00	
5:15	
5:30	
5:45	
6:00	
6:15	
6:30	
6:45	
7:00	
7:15	
7:30	
7:45	
8:00	
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afternoon	
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17:15	
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17:45	
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18:30	
18:45	
19:00	
19:15	

30-MINUTE PLANNER

morning	
5:00	
5:30	
6:00	
6:30	
7:00	
7:30	
8:00	
8:30	
9:00	
9:30	
10:00	
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afternoon	
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15:30	
16:00	
16:30	
17:00	
17:30	
18:00	
18:30	
19:00	
19:30	

24-HOUR PLANNER

morning	
1:00	
2:00	
3:00	
4:00	
5:00	
6:00	
7:00	
8:00	
9:00	
10:00	
11:00	
12:00	

afternoon	
13:00	
14:00	
15:00	
16:00	
17:00	
18:00	
19:00	
20:00	
21:00	
22:00	
23:00	
24:00	

DAILY PLANNER

Priority

--

To do

-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-

	Date:
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	
11	
12	
13	
14	
15	
16	
17	
18	
19	
20	
21	
22	
23	
24	

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Week:

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
6							
7							
8							
9							
10							
11							
12							
13							
14							
15							
16							
17							
18							
19							
20							
21							
22							

WEEKLY OVERVIEW

Priorities for this week

To-dos

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Habits	m	t	w	t	f	s	s

What went well this week

How I'll improve next week

WEEKLY OVERVIEW

Main goal

Action steps

1.

2.

3.

Personal to do list

Work to do list

Habits	m	t	w	t	f	s	s

Life balance

Relationships	Recreation
Health and fitness	Personal growth
Career	Spirituality

WEEKLY PLANNING

Plan for a successful week by identifying your priorities and setting five important tasks to be completed before any other tasks.

Most important tasks for the week	
1.	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other tasks for the week	

YEARLY PLANNER

January	February	March
April	May	June
July	August	September
October	November	December

PROJECT PLANNER

Project goal and description

Tools and resources

Start date

End date

Budget

Milestone

Milestone

Milestone

Notes

ACTIVITY TRACKING

DATE

ACTIVITY

How did you prepare for the activity?

How long did you spend on the activity?

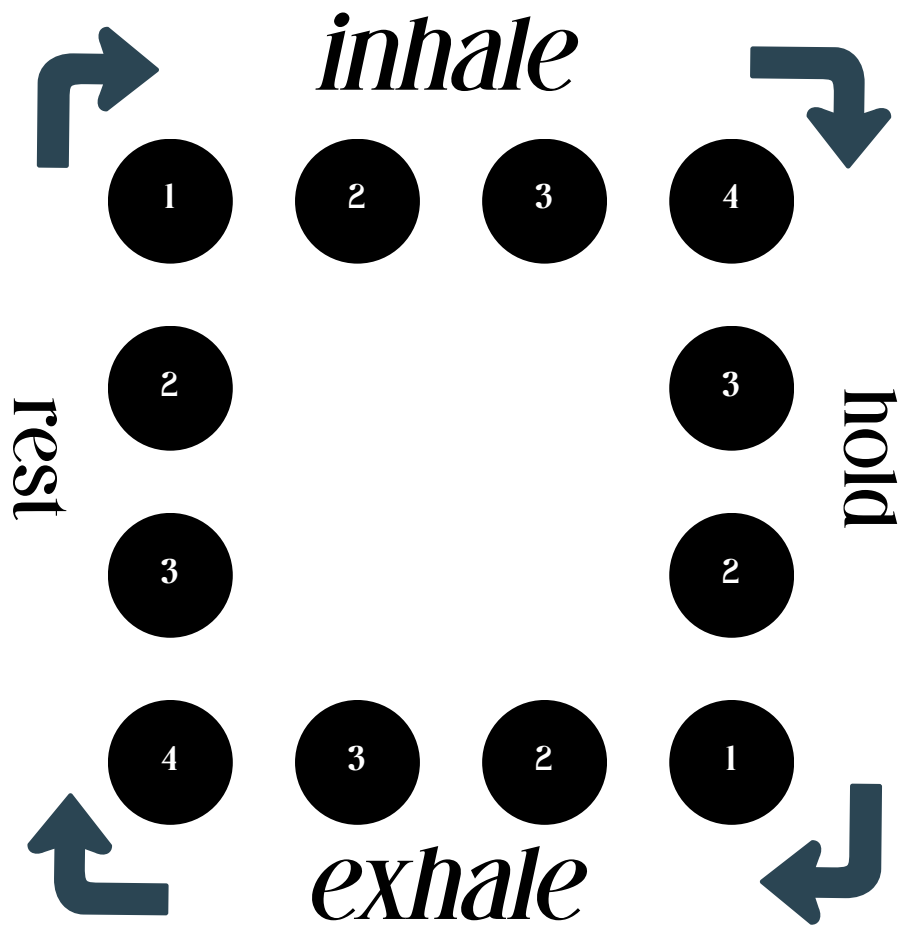
How enjoyable was the activity?



Describe the activity and what you did.

Did you face any challenges? If so, how did you overcome them?

BOX Breathing



Exhale for a count of four.

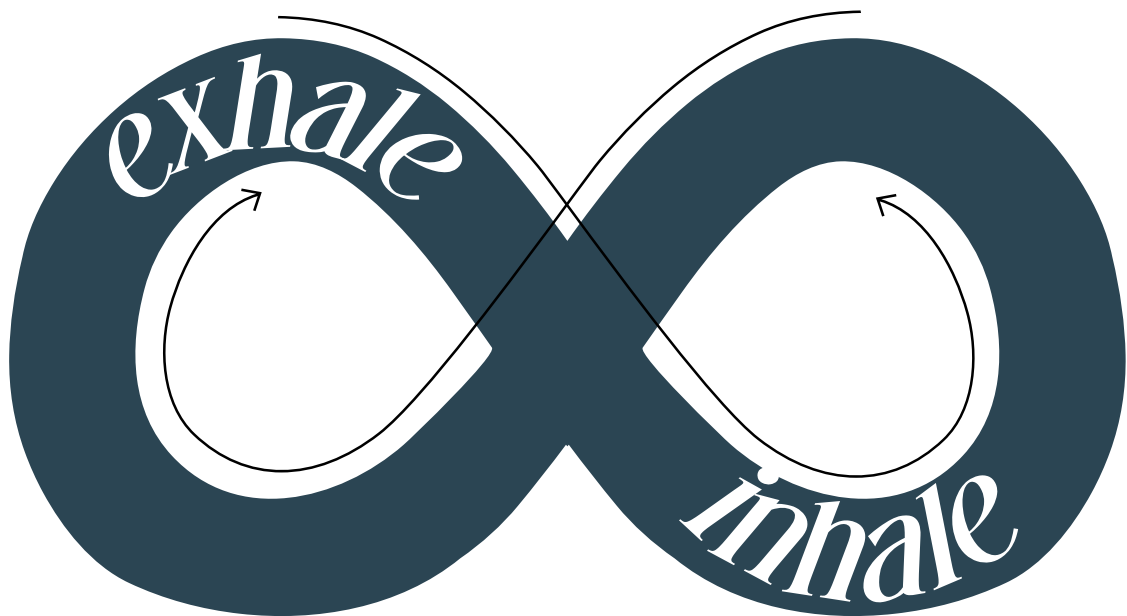
Hold your lungs empty for a count of 4.

Inhale for a count of four.

Hold the air in your lungs for a count of four.

Exhale and begin the pattern again.

lazy-8 breathing



Imagine an 8 on its side.

Start in the middle and trace up the right part of the 8 while you inhale. When you reach the middle, exhale as you trace the left part of the 8

WORKING MEMORY PRACTICE

Memory Cards

Create a deck of cards with pairs of matching pictures or numbers. Shuffle the cards and lay them face down. Flip over two cards at a time and try to remember their positions. The goal is to find all the matching pairs by remembering the cards' locations.

Digit Span

Have someone read out a series of numbers (e.g., 2, 7, 4, 9, 1) and then ask you to repeat them in the exact order. Start with shorter sequences and gradually increase the length as you improve.

Reverse Order

Take a familiar sentence or phrase and try to say it backward. For example, if the sentence is "The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog," you would say, "Dog lazy the over jumps fox brown quick the."

Shopping List Recall

Create a shopping list with a variety of items. Take a few minutes to memorize the list, then put it aside and try to recall as many items as possible without referring to the list. Challenge yourself to remember the items in the correct order.

Mental Math

Perform calculations mentally without using pen and paper or a calculator. Start with simple addition or subtraction and gradually increase the complexity. For example, calculate $16 + 25$ or $83 - 36$ in your head.

Word Association

Choose a category (e.g., fruits, animals) and take turns with a partner naming items within that category. Each person must remember and repeat the previously mentioned items before adding a new one. For example, "Apple," "Apple, Banana," "Apple, Banana, Cherry," and so on.

SMART GOALS

When setting a goal, make sure it is SMART. You can use this worksheet to establish your smart goals.

S

specific

What is the goal?
What do you want to accomplish?

m

measurable

How will you know you've accomplished the goal?

a

achievable

Is this goal achievable?
What will I need to do to achieve it?

r

relevant

How is this goal relevant to your life?

t

time bound

What is your deadline to accomplish the goal?

GOAL PLANNING

The Goal

Why this goal?

Benefits of achieving goal

Benefits of not achieving goal

Cost of achieving goal

Cost of not achieving goal

Challenges to achieving goals

strategies to overcome challenges

GOAL PLANNING

My goal

Why this goal is important to me

How I'll know I've reached my goal

My strengths that will help me

Challenges that may arise

How I will respond to these challenges

My action steps

GOAL PLANNING

my 3 month goal

month 1 milestone

month 2 milestone

month 3 milestone

action steps

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

incentives



HOW TO BE PRODUCTIVE

Answer the questions below to help to make your day more productive.

What are my long term goals?

What time of day am I the most productive?

What interrupts or distracts me?

Am I taking proper breaks?

MAKING DECISIONS

What decision are you trying to make?

List your options, their consequences, advantages and disadvantages

option	consequence	advantages	disadvantages
1.			
2.			
3.			

What are your values?

How will your values impact your decision?

What is your decision? What have you decided?



MAKING DECISIONS

Summary of decision

Decision date

Who the decision impacts

What information is needed to make the decision?

Option 1		Option 2	
Advantages	Disadvantages	Advantages	Disadvantages
			

Conclusion

PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION

Progressive muscle involves tensing and relaxing all the major body muscle groups. Throughout the exercise, keep your breathing deep and regular.



FACE: Raise your eyebrows as high as possible and wrinkle your forehead. Squeeze your eyes shut tight, clench your teeth together and squash your whole face up.

NECK: Place your chin down toward your chest and turn your head slowly to the right and then to the left.

CHEST: Take as deep a breath as possible pushing your chest out and hold it for a count of 5 then release.

SHOULDERS: Shrug your shoulders and hold for a count of 5. Then, slowly pull your shoulders back and then push your shoulders forward.

UPPER BACK: Arch your back and release.

ABDOMEN: Pull in your tummy then push it out.

HANDS & ARMS: clench both fists, squeezing them as hard as you can. Tighten both biceps and hold this tension for several seconds. Release the tension and feel your arms relax.

LEGS: Raise your right leg, tense your thigh and calf muscles, and pull your toes back toward you. Then, repeat for the left leg.

FEET: Point your toes then pull your toes toward you as far as possible.

CHALLENGE NEGATIVE THOUGHTS

Am I making assumptions and jumping to conclusions?

What is a more positive way to think about this?

What is a more helpful thought?

What can I do to solve this problem?

What would I say to a good friend?

Will I be worrying about this in a few months?

How could I look at this differently?

CHALLENGING THINKING

My thought:

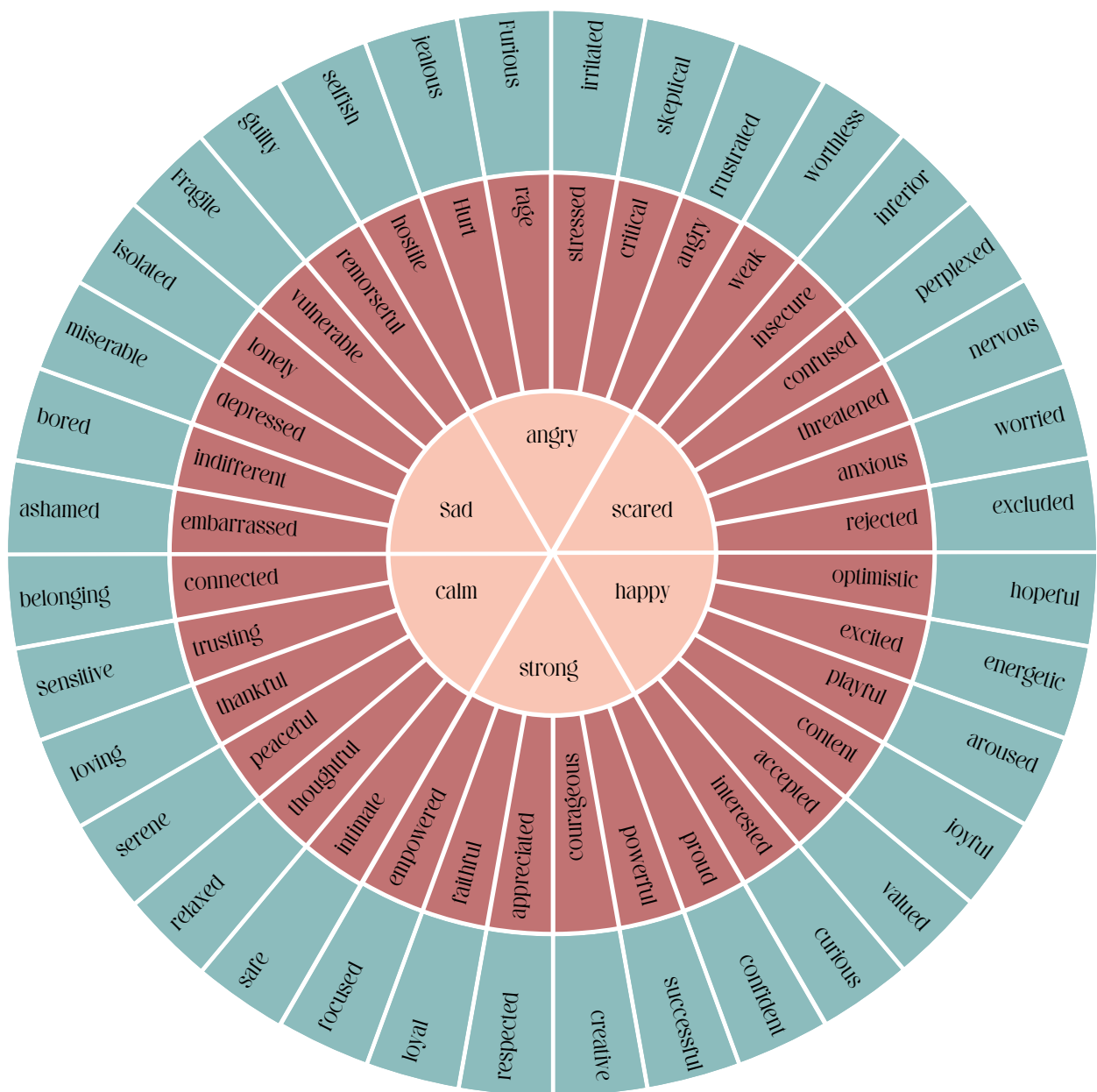
What are the facts?	What evidence tells me this might not be true?	What if it does happen?

My new thought:

THE EMOTIONS WHEEL

Robert Plutchik

The Emotions Wheel is a valuable tool for coping with emotions. To use it effectively, start by identifying the core emotion you're experiencing. Then, explore the other emotions that branch out from it. Next, use the wheel to find alternative or contrasting emotions that can help shift your perspective.



POSITIVE AFFIRMATION STATEMENTS

Positive affirmation statements can help you overcome negative thoughts. When you say them with feeling and truly believe in them, you can start to make positive changes. To get started, note down any recurring negative thoughts you have. Now choose an affirmation that is the opposite of that thought.

I don't need to be perfect to be worthy of love.

I have people who love and respect me.

I deserve to be appreciated.

I have everything I need to succeed.

I have valuable skills to share.

I am growing and learning every day.

I am kind and take care of others.

I have prepared well and I can give a great presentation

I am really excited to take on new challenges.

IDENTIFYING TRIGGERS

Use this worksheet to track and identify triggers in different situations or experiences. Regularly reviewing and analyzing the triggers can help you gain insight into patterns, develop coping strategies, and promote self-awareness.

Date	
Trigger Description:	
Emotional Response	
Physical Sensations	
Thoughts or Beliefs Describe any thoughts or beliefs associated with the trigger. Include both automatic thoughts and underlying beliefs or assumptions.	
Behavioral Response Describe how you typically respond or behave when triggered. Include any actions, avoidance, or coping mechanisms you may use.	
Impact on well-being Reflect on the overall impact of the trigger on your well-being. Consider the emotional, physical, and cognitive effects it has on you.	

URGE SURFING

Urge surfing is a technique developed by the psychologist Alan Marlatt and is used to get through an urge without acting on destructive impulses and habits

When you feel an urge, allow it to continue. Notice where in your body you are experiencing the urge. Focus on the sensations in this body part. What do they feel like?

Now, bring your attention to your breath and notice it for the next few minutes. Inhale...exhale....

Gently refocus your attention on the part of your body where you experience the urge. What does the sensation feel like? Has it shifted?

Imagine sending the breath to those parts of your body feeling the sensation. Take your time and watch and feel the sensations.

Imagine the sensations from your urge are a wave. As the sensations peak and subside, you can imagine the wave rise and fall. Use your breath like a surfboard to ride each wave as it comes. Practise this for a few minutes until the urge subsides completely.



MINDFULNESS PRACTICE

Set an Intention:

Begin by setting an intention for your mindfulness practice. What do you hope to cultivate or experience through mindfulness?

Body Scan:

Bring your attention to your body. Scan your body from head to toe, noticing any sensations or areas of tension. Write down any observations.

Breath Awareness:

Notice the sensation of each inhalation and exhalation. Observe the natural rhythm of your breath without trying to control it. Write down any observations.

Mindful Observation:

Choose an object in your environment and mindfully observe it, noticing its colors, textures, and shapes. Write down your observations and reflections.

Emotion Awareness:

Notice any emotions present within you without judgment. Allow them to be as they are. Write down the emotions you identify and any insights or reflections that arise.

MINDFUL JOURNALING

Write down any thoughts, reflections, or insights that emerged during your mindfulness practice. Use this space to process your experiences and deepen your understanding of mindfulness in your life.

Write down one specific action or behavior you will approach with mindfulness today. It can be as simple as eating a meal mindfully or engaging in active listening during a conversation.

GRATITUDE PRACTICE

Reflect on three things you are grateful for in this moment. They can be simple or profound, related to your environment, relationships, or personal experiences.

1.

2.

3.

MEDITATION PRACTICE

Date	
Time	
Type of meditation	
Mantra	

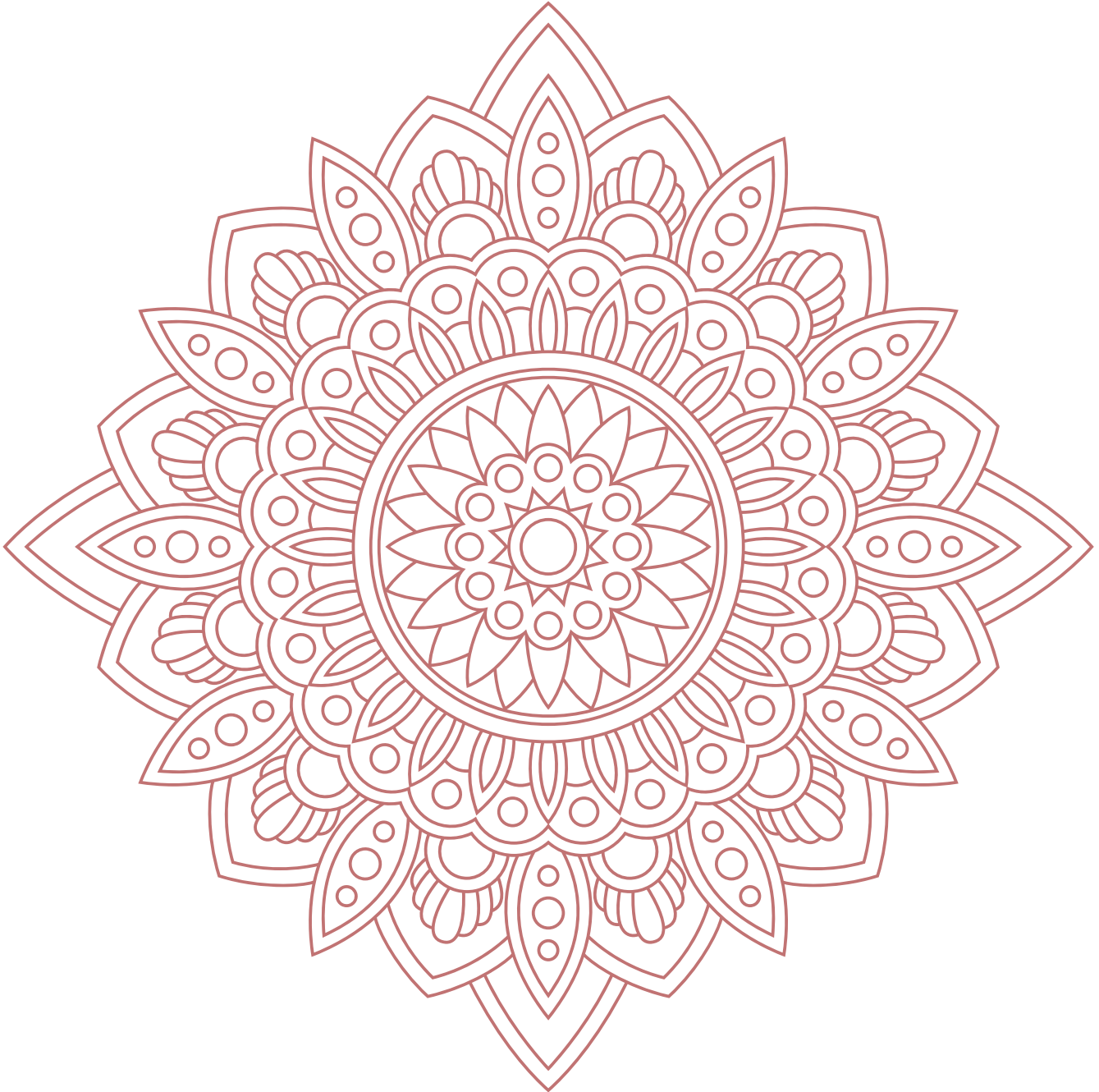
The benefits I gained from today's meditation

The challenges I felt during today's meditation

The emotions I felt during today's meditation

MEDITATION PRACTICE

Take some time to colour this mandala mindfully. This will help you pay attention to the present moment and clear your mind of distractions.



How did this activity make you feel?

10 WAYS TO RELAX

Find a Comfortable Space:	Choose a quiet and comfortable space where you can relax without distractions. Ensure you have enough privacy and a calming environment.
Mindful Breathing:	Start by focusing on your breath. Close your eyes and take a deep breath in through your nose, feeling your abdomen expand. Slowly exhale through your mouth, letting go of any tension.
Progressive Muscle Relaxation:	Begin by tensing and releasing each muscle group in your body. Start with your toes, gradually working your way up to your head. Contract each muscle group for a few seconds, then release and let go.
Guided Visualization:	Imagine yourself in a peaceful and serene place, such as a tranquil beach or a beautiful garden. Visualize the details of the environment, using all your senses to fully immerse yourself in the experience.
Sensory Awareness:	Engage your senses to promote relaxation. Focus on the sensations around you, such as the feeling of your feet on the ground, the sounds of nature or calming music, or the scent of a relaxing essential oil.
Affirmations:	Repeat positive affirmations to yourself, such as "I am calm and centered," or "I have the ability to relax and focus,.". Choose affirmations that resonate with you and promote a sense of confidence and relaxation.
Time in Nature:	If possible, spend time in nature to relax and rejuvenate. Take a walk in a park, sit by a lake, or simply enjoy the beauty of natural surroundings. Connect with the calming and grounding energy of nature.
Reflection and Gratitude:	Take a few moments to reflect on things you are grateful for in your life. Write them down in a gratitude journal or simply reflect on them in your mind. Focusing on gratitude can bring a sense of peace.
Practice Self-Care:	Engage in activities that promote self-care and relaxation, such as listening to soothing music, reading a book, or engaging in a hobby you enjoy. Prioritize self-care regularly to support your overall well-being.
Exit Mindfully:	When you feel ready to end your relaxation session, bring your attention back to the present moment. Take a few deep breaths and wiggle your fingers and toes. Carry the sense of relaxation with you in your day.

DECLUTTERING CHEAT SHEET

- Identify the Area:**
Write down the specific area or room you want to declutter (e.g., bedroom, kitchen, closet).

- Set Goals:**
Define your decluttering goals. What do you want to achieve in this space? Create specific goals, such as "Create a clean and organized workspace".

- Prioritize:**
List the areas or sections within the chosen space that require the most attention. Start with the highest priority areas to maximize your impact.

- Sorting Categories:**
Create sorting categories to help you make decisions about items. Common categories include: Keep, Donate/Sell, Discard, and Unsure.

- Start Decluttering:**
Begin the decluttering process in one area or section at a time. Remove items one by one and decide which category they belong to.

- Make Decisions:**
Make decisions confidently and promptly for each item. Avoid overthinking and trust your instincts. If you're unsure about items, place them in a separate "Unsure" box.

- Take Breaks:**
Decluttering can be physically and mentally demanding. Take short breaks to rest, hydrate, and recharge your energy.

- Organize and Arrange:**
Once you've decluttered a section, organize and arrange the items you've decided to keep. Find appropriate storage solutions or containers to maintain order.

- Repeat the Process:**
Move to the next area or section and repeat steps 5-8 until you've covered the entire space or achieved your decluttering goals.

- Reflect and Maintain:**
Reflect on the progress you've made and the positive impact it has had on your space and well-being. Develop habits to maintain a clutter-free environment in the future.

thank you

We hope this workbook has been a valuable resource in your quest to understand, develop, and harness the power of your executive functions. As you move forward, remember that you have the power to navigate challenges, make informed decisions, and achieve your goals. Embrace your unique strengths, and trust in your ability to overcome obstacles.