

Planning, Prioritizing & Decision Fatigue

Making life feel less like one big mental traffic jam

When everything feels important, it helps to make the next step smaller.

Small Steps Create Big Change

1 Why planning can be hard

ADHD can make it hard to picture the future, break down big tasks into smaller steps, and hold several steps in mind at once.

Without a clear sense of time or sequence, planning can feel overwhelming, and even simple tasks may feel confusing or unmanageable.



2 Prioritizing problems

It can be difficult to decide what matters most, where to start, or how to choose between many tasks that all feel important.

Everything can feel urgent, which can lead to feeling stuck, overwhelmed or jumping between tasks without finishing them.



3 Decision fatigue

Having too many choices can drain mental energy. Even small decisions can feel exhausting, making it harder to start tasks or follow through.

When the brain is overloaded with options, it often chooses nothing — or sticks with the same patterns, even when a change could help.



4 Helpful planning tools

Tools don't have to be perfect — just helpful.



Brain dumps

Get everything out of your head and onto paper.



Top three lists

Choose 1-3 key things to focus on.



Weekly previews

Look ahead to see what's coming and prepare.



Choose a next action

What's the smallest step you can take?



Color coding

Use colours to group tasks, subjects or areas of life.



Templates

Use checklists, planners or reusable formats to save mental energy.



Plan backwards

Start from the due date and work out the steps in reverse.

Different tools work for different people. Find what fits you!

5 Simple questions to ask



What matters most today?

What will make the biggest positive difference right now?



What is the next smallest step?

What's one tiny step I can take?



What can wait?

What is not urgent right now?



What support do I need?

Can I ask someone, use a tool, or take a break first?

6 Keep it realistic

Build in buffer time, expect that things may take longer than planned, and give yourself permission to adjust the plan.

A flexible plan is more sustainable than a perfect one. Progress often comes from small, consistent steps, not from doing everything all at once.



Plans can change. That's okay!

