

Routines, Habits & Transitions

Building systems that actually fit real life

The best routine is the one you can return to.

*Small Steps
Big Changes*

1 Why routines help

Routines reduce decision fatigue by taking the guesswork out of everyday tasks. They support memory, create structure and make tasks easier to start, especially for ADHD brains.

*Less to decide.
More energy
for what matters.*



2 Why routines can still be hard

Even when we know routines are helpful, many things can get in the way, including:



Boredom

Tasks can feel repetitive and uninteresting.



All-or-nothing thinking

"If I can't do it perfectly, what's the point?"



Time blindness

It's hard to know how much time things take.



Life interruptions

Unexpected changes can disrupt even the best plans.



Starting too big

Trying to change too much at once can feel overwhelming.

3 Making habits stick

Habits are built through consistency, not perfection. Here are some ADHD-friendly strategies:



Habit stacking

Pair a new habit with something you already do. "After I make my coffee, I will take my medication."



Reduce friction

Make it easier to start. Prepare ahead, simplify steps and remove unnecessary barriers.



Keep supplies visible

Out of sight often means out of mind. Keep what you need where you can see it.



Pair with cues

Use visual, auditory or environmental cues, like a sticky note, notification or a specific location.



Start small

Choose one simple habit. Build from there as it becomes more natural.

Small steps still lead somewhere.

4 Transitions

Shifting from one activity to another can be surprisingly hard for ADHD brains. Transitions require us to stop, let go of what we are doing, mentally shift, and start something new. This can create delay, irritability or avoidance, even when the next task is important.



PAUSE

BREATHE

NEXT STEP

Transitions take energy. That's real and valid.

5 Transition tools

These strategies can make moving between activities smoother and less stressful:



Warnings

Give yourself a heads-up. Try a 5-10 minute warning before a transition.



Visual schedules

Use a written or visual plan to see what's next.



Timers

Set a timer to signal the end of one activity and the start of the next.



Buffer time

Build a little extra time between activities to account for delays.



Transition rituals

Try a consistent cue, like a deep breath, a stretch or a short song to mark the change.



Movement breaks

A little movement can help your brain shift gears.



One task at a time

Focus on fully finishing (or pausing) one task before starting the next.

6 A compassionate reminder

Missing a day, a week or even longer does not mean failure. Routines are a practice, not a test. Life happens, and it's okay. You can always reset gently and begin again.

*Progress, not perfection.
You've got this.*