

Working Memory, Organization & Follow Through

Why things get lost, forgotten or left half done

Your brain may need a system outside your brain.

Small
Systems
Big
Support

1 What is working memory?

Working memory is your brain's mental sticky note. It temporarily holds information in your mind long enough to use it — like remembering a phone number long enough to dial it, or keeping a few steps in mind while making a snack.

For many people with ADHD, working memory can be less reliable, so information can slip away quickly.



2 How it shows up

Working memory challenges can look like:



Forgetting why you walked into a room.



Missing steps in a task.



Losing track in conversations.



Forgetting appointments or plans.



Misplacing items like keys, phone or wallet.

It's not carelessness — it's how my brain works.

3 Organization challenges

ADHD can make it harder to keep things organized, even when you want to.



Clutter

"Surfaces can quickly become overwhelming."



Piles

"Things get set down 'for now' and pile up."



Digital chaos

"Too many files, tabs, emails or unread messages can feel overwhelming."



Inconsistent systems

"It can be hard to stick to one system for long."



Difficulty deciding

"It's hard to know where things belong, so they often end up in the wrong place (or no place)."

4 Why follow through is hard

Completing tasks involves more than just remembering. It takes:



Remembering what to do.



Sequencing steps in the right order.



Time awareness (knowing how long it will take and feeling the passage of time).



Energy and motivation to get started and keep going.

If any of these pieces are challenging, follow through can feel really hard.

5 Helpful supports

External tools and simple systems can make a big difference. Try what works for you!

Support today for a calmer tomorrow.



Create launch pads by the door.

"A home for keys, wallet, bag and important items."



Use fewer storage zones.

"Keep it simple so it's easier to put things away."



Use checklists.

"Break tasks into smaller steps and check them off."



Set calendar reminders.

"Use alerts for appointments, tasks and deadlines."



Build repeating routines.

"Make daily routines automatic with cues and supports."



Use visual systems.

"Labels, colour coding and clear containers can help."



Close the loop.

"Check back, put it away, or make a note so it's truly complete."



Try one small daily reset.

"Take 5-10 minutes to tidy, reset and plan for what's next."