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MIDLIFE AUDHD

**Why coping stopped working
— and how to adjust without
burning out**

*A practical, neuroaffirming guide
for late-diagnosed women*



If you're late-diagnosed autistic and/or ADHD, you might feel like you used to cope better – and now you can't.

This is common.

Many women reach midlife after years of:

- Masking to meet expectations
- Pushing through exhaustion
- Relying on effort instead of support

This isn't a personal decline.

It's often long-term overload catching up.

This isn't failure.

It's capacity depletion – a recognised response to sustained neurological strain.

WHAT'S CHANGED?

Coping strategies often stop working when:

- Life demands increase (work, care, emotional labour)
- Recovery time decreases
- Hormonal changes affect regulation, focus, and tolerance
- Masking becomes harder to sustain

What once worked through effort alone may now require adaptation.

WHAT TO DO INSTEAD

Practical steps you can take...

These are adjustments, not productivity hacks.

1. Stop increasing effort – reduce the demand

If something feels impossible, ask:
What can be simplified, postponed, or removed?

(e.g. fewer social plans, simpler meals, pausing a non-urgent task)

→ Capacity grows when demands shrink.

2. Update your coping strategies

Ask:

- Did this strategy rely on adrenaline or urgency?
- Does it still work when I'm already tired?

If not, it needs changing – not forcing.

3. Respond earlier to warning signs

Notice one signal you usually ignore:

- Exhaustion
- Irritability
- Sensory overwhelm

Act sooner than you normally would.

→ Early response prevents deeper burnout.

4. Separate ability from capacity

You may still be capable – just not sustainably.

Try replacing:

“I should be able to do this”

With:

“Is this realistic for my capacity right now?”

This reduces self-blame without lowering self-worth.

5. Measure success by sustainability

Ask:

- Can I maintain this without crashing?
- Or only by pushing through?

If it's the second, it's not supportive – it's draining.

You don't need to return to who you were before burnout.

You need ways of living that fit your current nervous system.

Adjustment is not failure.
It's regulation.

If this helped:

- Follow [@midlifeaudhd](#) for practical, research-informed tools
- Save this guide for low-capacity days
- Share it with someone who feels like coping “used to be easier”

