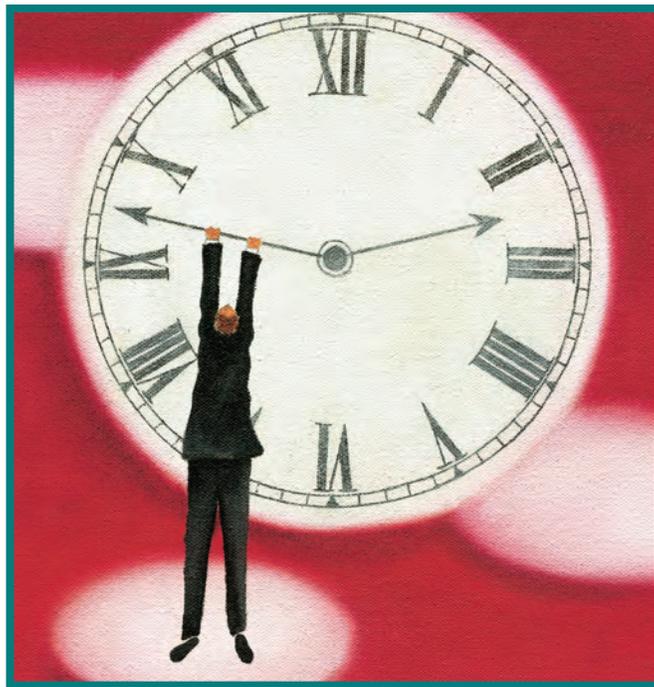


Better Time Management with Adult ADHD

19 ways to meet deadlines and get things done



From **ADDitude's** Experts

ADDITUDE
LIVING WELL WITH **ATTENTION DEFICIT**

ADDITUDE

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Better Time Management with Adult ADHD

19 ways to meet deadlines and get things done

Here is your game plan for organizing and finishing projects—big and small.

By Edward Hallowell, M.D., and Sandy Maynard, M.S.

9 Time Management Tips from Dr. Ned Hallowell

Remember rotary telephones? I had to use one at the lakeside cottage my family rented last summer, and, boy, was it irritating. That old monster took forever to dial. OK, it took only 11 seconds (I timed it), but that seemed an eternity in today's fast-paced world. Which got me thinking about why **I found it so irritating to spend an entire 11 seconds dialing a phone number!** So what?

Without intending to, many people find they live in a rush they didn't create, or at least didn't mean to create. Sometimes busy-ness is blissful. But not if "busy" keeps you from doing what's most important to you. Here's how to overcome this common malady:

1. Focus on what truly matters.

Don't spread yourself too thin, and don't get sidetracked. Remember, cell phones, personal computers, and other high-tech gadgets enable us to do more, but more is not necessarily better.

2. Create a positive emotional environment wherever you go.

Positive emotion is not a frill. It's the on/off switch for effective mental functioning. When you feel secure in your surroundings, you think better, behave better, work better, and are better able to help others. So do your best to build positive relationships. Always aim to be friendly and upbeat.

3. Don't waste time "screensucking."

What's that? It's being glued to your TV or computer screen. Screen-sucking interferes with the brain's ability to focus. Whenever possible, limit such electronic hypnosis to one hour a day.

4. Minimize distractions.

Things that distract you on a regular basis should be addressed. Keep losing your glasses? Train yourself to put them in a special place. If you're distracted by magazines strewn about your kitchen, put a basket in another room, and make sure the magazines get into it.

5. Delegate anything you're not good at.

Is paying bills each month an irritant because you never manage to send them in on time? Hand the job over to your spouse. If you're not married (or have a spouse who isn't good at it, either), put as many bills as possible on auto-pay.

Your goal is not to be independent, but to be *effectively interdependent*—that is, to share responsibilities for tasks with other people.

6. Slow down.

Periodically ask yourself why you're in such a hurry, and take the question seriously. If the answer is "because I'm late," assess your priorities and cut out unnecessary responsibilities. The time you save should be devoted solely to personal or family time.

7. Think twice about multitasking.

Research shows that doing two things at once takes about 50 percent longer than doing them sequentially. An exception to this rule: Some people with ADHD focus better if they do something essentially mindless while tackling an important task—for example, listening to music or balancing on a ball while doing homework.

8. Invest your time for maximum return.

Not sure where the time goes? Create a chart, and record everything you do. Maybe the chart indicates you're spending too much time looking for lost keys or nagging your teenage daughter to clean up her room. Think of some creative ways to eliminate these (hanging a key hook near the front door or deciding that her room doesn't really need to be clean, after all).

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9. Play a lot.

Imaginatively engage in what you are doing. This will use the best parts of your wonderful, creative mind. Playing is not a waste of time. It will make you more effective at whatever you're doing, whether it's carrying on a conversation or baking an apple pie.



Dr. Edward Hallowell is a practicing psychiatrist and founder of the Hallowell Center for Cognitive and Emotional Health in Sudbury, Massachusetts, New York City, San Francisco and Seattle. A former instructor of Harvard Medical School, he is the author of 20 books, including the bestsellers: *Driven to Distraction*, *Delivered from Distraction*, *CrazyBusy*, and most recently, *Driven to Distraction at Work*. Dr. Hallowell has AD/HD himself.

10 Time-Management Techniques from Sandy Maynard

The word deadline dates back to the Civil War. At the notorious Confederate prison camp at Andersonville, Georgia, a line was drawn 17 feet inside the perimeter fence. Guards were authorized to shoot any prisoner who crossed the line.

Adults and children with attention deficit disorder (ADHD) don't need a gun pointed at us to get us going on projects. But many of us do need organization help because we have a hard time with time management—especially with difficult or boring projects. This is certainly true for me. Take this article. I assured my editor that I'd have no trouble getting it done on time, and yet the more I thought about it, the harder it seemed to write. So here I am, one day before my deadline, and I'm just now starting.

I've had similar difficulties in trying to complete my master's thesis (after many years as an ADHD coach, I returned to school three years ago). I learned a lot of things about deadlines and getting things done during those months. Here's my 10-point plan for meeting all of your deadlines, big and small:

1. Don't bite off more than you can chew.

Consider how much time is available in your busy schedule, and plan accordingly. If you take on a new project, you may have to cut back on other activities in order to finish it on time.

2. Post your deadlines where you will see them.

This simple action will remind you to use your time wisely. When I went for my master's degree, I highlighted the syllabus and put it on the wall over my desk. When I wrote my thesis, I created a computer screensaver that read "February 26 or Bust."

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3. Break big projects into smaller parts, and assign a deadline for completing each.

We're usually given a deadline for the date by which the entire project has to be completed. To keep yourself on track, mark the date by which you should complete one-quarter of the project, one-half, and so on. Those dates will alert you to problems while there's still time to play catchup.

4. Set deadlines for others.

We people with ADHD dislike deadlines so much that we're often reluctant to set appropriate deadlines for others. Often, as I was working on my thesis, I'd find that I needed to ask my professors a question. To make sure I could get going on time each Saturday morning, I asked them to get back to me with answers no later than Friday afternoon. Otherwise, I would have lost momentum—or relied upon the excuse that I couldn't keep working because I was unsure about what to do next.

5. When time runs short, outsource.

Don't assume that you must do every portion of a project. In many cases, it makes sense to outsource or delegate.

6. Take frequent breaks.

Those who fail to get away from a project occasionally are likely to start avoiding it—or to just give up. Taking breaks will help you avoid burnout.

7. Start and end when you say you will.

While writing my thesis, I started at 9 A.M. and ended at 5 P.M., so I had time to socialize in the evening. Knowing I would quit at 5 kept me going. I could say to myself, "only two more hours... only one more hour," and so on. If I hadn't committed to stopping at 5, I might have thought, "I'll take a break and do something else and work on it later in the evening." This kind of thinking is dangerous for individuals with ADHD, who are easily distracted.

8. Change your inner voice.

Think of positive things you can say to yourself to stay motivated. Some of my clients write down "positive affirmations" and keep them nearby to glance at.

EXAMPLE: "I'm going to feel great when I hand this in to my boss on time." Or, "I can do this!" As I was writing my thesis, I often caught myself thinking, "Oh, well, I can just sign up for another quarter and take my time." Each time I did, I immediately changed that to "No!"

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You will get this thesis done this quarter!”

9. Define your objectives.

When I started my thesis project, my objective was to learn as much as possible about my topic. I accomplished that, but it wasn't until my objective became finishing by the end of February that I was able to stay focused on the hard part: writing. Finishing on time is one of the most important objectives for people with ADHD.

10. If all else fails... hire a nanny.

It seemed an extravagance at the time, but I hired someone to watch over me when I was earning my master's degree. That's right, a nanny. I gave her strict instructions. She was to arrive at 8:00 A.M., fix breakfast for me, and make sure I was at my desk by 9 A.M. There was to be no radio, no TV, no telephone—and no e-mail. She kept me on track, and now I have an M.S. at the end of my name.



Sandy Maynard, M.S., is a pioneer in the field of coaching people with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). She was instrumental in the development of The National Attention Deficit Disorder Association's Coaching Guidelines and a founding board member for the Institute for the Advancement of AD/HD Coaching (IAAC). She is a certified Master Practitioner of Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) and uses a holistic health and wellness approach with her clients. Ms.

Maynard lives in Washington, D.C., where she operates Catalytic Coaching. She lectures internationally and is a regular contributor to *ADDitude* magazine. Visit her on the web on sandymaynard.com.

Other articles of interest:

1. Yours, Mind, and Hours: Understanding Your Partner's Time Style. Is a skewed sense of time causing stress in your marriage? Ease time management tension by trying out your spouse's perception of time.

<http://www.additudemag.com/adhd/article/755.html>

2. Never Be Late Again! Time management strategies to help ADHD adults be on time and organized.

<http://www.additudemag.com/adhd/article/2495.html>

3. When You Need a Body Double. Difficult tasks are easier to accomplish if someone is on hand to keep you company.

<http://www.additudemag.com/adhd/article/893.html>

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ADHD Time Assessment Chart

Dr. Ned Hallowell developed a chart that indicates whether various tasks are really worth your time and effort. This ADHD time-management chart weighs tasks against the effort they take, the fulfillment they give, and their necessity.

Crazy Busy Time Chart

| I. Activity | II. Average Hours per Day | III. Effort Factor (1 = most, 5 = least) | IV. Fulfillment Factor (1 = least, 5 = most) | V. E x F (column III x column IV) | VI. Necessity, Right-Thing-to- Do Factor (1 = least, 5 = most) | VII. Worth-It Factor (product of columns III, IV, and VI) |
|---|------------------------------------|---|--|--|---|---|
| PERSONAL CARE | | | | | | |
| Sleep | | | | | | |
| Eating | | | | | | |
| Bathroom | | | | | | |
| Shower | | | | | | |
| PERSONAL CARE (TOTAL HOURS) | | | | | | |
| HOUSEHOLD | | | | | | |
| Housework | | | | | | |
| Food (prep and cleanup) | | | | | | |
| Laundry | | | | | | |
| Lawn and other outdoor work | | | | | | |
| Purchasing goods and services (food, car maintenance, etc.) | | | | | | |
| Professional services (doctor, haircutter, etc.) | | | | | | |
| Caring for/helping household members | | | | | | |
| Caring for/helping non- household members | | | | | | |
| HOUSEHOLD (TOTAL HOURS) | | | | | | |
| <p>Excerpted from <i>CrazyBusy: Overstretched, Overbooked, and About to Snap! Strategies for Coping in a World Gone ADD</i>. © 2006 by Edward M. Hallowell, M.D., Ballantine Books, a division of Random House, Inc., N.Y</p> | | | | | | |

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|--|------------------------------------|---|--|--|---|---|
| WORK AND WORK-RELATED ACTIVITIES | | | | | | |
| The part of work you like best | | | | | | |
| The part of work you like least | | | | | | |
| The part of work that's in-between | | | | | | |
| WORK AND WORK-RELATED ACTIVITIES (TOTAL HOURS) | | | | | | |
| DRIVING, COMMUTING, TAXING (TOTAL HOURS) | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES (TOTAL HOURS) | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| ORGANIZATION, CIVIC, AND RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES (VOLUNTEER, UNPAID) | | | | | | |
| Organizational | | | | | | |
| Civic | | | | | | |
| Religious | | | | | | |
| ORGANIZATION, CIVIC, AND RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES (VOLUNTEER, UNPAID) (TOTAL HOURS) | | | | | | |
| LEISURE (TOTAL HOURS) | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| SOCIALIZING | | | | | | |
| With people you like a lot | | | | | | |
| With people you don't much like | | | | | | |
| With people in between | | | | | | |
| Playing a sport | | | | | | |
| Other exercise | | | | | | |
| SOCIALIZING (TOTAL HOURS) | | | | | | |

Crazy Busy Time Chart

| I. Activity | II. Average Hours per Day | III. Effort Factor (1 = most, 5 = least) | IV. Fulfillment Factor (1 = least, 5 = most) | V. E x F (column III x column IV) | VI. Necessity, Right-Thing-to- Do Factor (1 = least, 5 = most) | VII. Worth-It Factor (product of columns III, IV, and VI) |
|--|------------------------------------|---|--|--|---|---|
| ELECTRONIC TIME | | | | | | |
| E-mail (necessary) | | | | | | |
| E-mail (screen sucking) | | | | | | |
| Internet (necessary) | | | | | | |
| Internet (screen sucking) | | | | | | |
| Television (necessary) | | | | | | |
| Television (screen sucking) | | | | | | |
| Telephone (landline) | | | | | | |
| Cell Phone | | | | | | |
| Blackberry, Treo, etc. (necessary) | | | | | | |
| Blackberry, Treo, etc. (screen-sucking) | | | | | | |
| ELECTRONIC TIME (TOTAL HOURS) | | | | | | |
| INTIMATE TIME (LOVEMAKING, CUDDLING, INTIMATE CONVERSATION) (TOTAL HOURS) | | | | | | |
| WASTED, KILLED, OR FORGOTTEN TIME (TOTAL HOURS) | | | | | | |
| CREATIVE TIME (TOTAL HOURS) | | | | | | |
| OTHER (DESCRIBE) (TOTAL HOURS) | | | | | | |
| <p>Excerpted from <i>CrazyBusy: Overstretched, Overbooked, and About to Snap! Strategies for Coping in a World Gone ADD.</i> © 2006 by Edward M. Hallowell, M.D., Ballantine Books, a division of Random House, Inc., N.Y</p> | | | | | | |

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www.adhdreports.com

9 Conditions Often Diagnosed with ADHD

Depression. Bipolar Disorder. Anxiety. OCD. And five more conditions that often show up alongside attention deficit.

About 80 percent of individuals with ADHD are diagnosed with at least one other psychiatric condition at some time in their lives. This in-depth special report looks at the nine most common, outlining symptoms, treatment strategies, and differentiating features of each. Plus, strategies for living well with any mental health condition.

>> Learn more about this special report: <http://additu.de/related>

Mindfulness and Other Natural Treatments

The best non-medical treatments for ADHD, including exercise, green time, and mindful meditation.

Learn how mindfulness works on ADHD brains, and how to begin practicing it today. Plus, research the benefits of other alternative treatments like yoga and deep breathing exercises—including some designed especially for kids—as well as the science behind each natural therapy.

>> Learn more about this special report: <http://additu.de/mindfulness>

ADHD 101

A complete overview of ADHD, outlining every step from diagnosis to treatment—all the way to living successfully with attention deficit.

From the moment you suspect ADHD in yourself or your child, you have hundreds of questions. Which doctors can evaluate symptoms? What medication side effects should you be prepared for? Can diet help? This comprehensive eBook has over 100 pages of expert advice, personal stories, and more to help you become an ADHD expert.

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ADHD Time Assessment Chart

Do you spend your time wisely? Use this tool to find out.

Boost Your Productivity At Work

ADHD can make any job more challenging. Keep up with this expert advice.

You Know You Have ADHD When...

Real ADHDers share personal stories highlighting the lighter side of living with attention deficit.

Smart Comebacks

Witty responses to ADHD doubters.

It's Not ADHD: 3 Common Diagnosis Mistakes

Doctors are sometimes too quick to diagnose ADHD. Read up on common misdiagnoses.

Find these and many more free ADHD resources online at:

<http://additu.de/freedownloads>

from **ADDitude**:

7 Fixes for Self-Defeating ADHD Behaviors

>> <http://additu.de/brown>

Are your bad habits setting you up for failure? Find out what behaviors to watch for, and seven simple changes that can help you reach your full potential and put you on the path to success. Entrepreneur and ADHD coach Alan Brown teaches “fix-it” strategies that he used to cope with his own ADHD.

Organizing Solutions for People with ADHD

>> <http://additu.de/org-web>

Feeling lost in the mess of “stuff”? Susan Pinsky, a professional organizer who specializes in ADHD, discusses simple steps for reducing clutter, eliminating excess from your life, and why ADHDers should aim for “good enough” instead of “perfect.” These simple, straightforward solutions will help you calm the chaos and conquer the clutter — for good.

Healing the ADHD Brain: Interventions and Strategies that Work

>> <http://additu.de/healing>

There’s no one-size-fits-all approach for treating ADHD. Here, Daniel G. Amen, M.D., explains treatment options ranging from medication and supplements to diet and exercise.

Survival Strategies for Moms with ADHD

>> <http://additu.de/adhd-moms>

Mothers with ADHD, especially those parenting ADHD children, often put the needs of others before themselves. Despite their good intentions, when moms leave their own ADHD untreated, the whole family can suffer. Ellen Liptman, Ph.D., outlines how to let go of society’s expectations of being “perfect” and focus on your own accomplishments. After all, being a mom is a tough job!

Smart Money Strategies for ADHD Adults

>> <http://additu.de/ta>

You don’t need to be an investment banker to make financially sound decisions. In this audio presentation hosted by Stephanie Sarkis, Ph.D., you’ll learn how executive functions affect your ability to manage money, how to avoid impulsive purchases, and more. Save, spend, budget, and plan like the pros!

FREE ADHD Newsletters from ADDitude

Sign up to receive critical news and information about ADHD diagnosis and treatment, plus strategies for school, parenting, and living better with ADHD:
<http://additu.de/email>

Adult ADHD and LD (weekly)

Expert advice on managing your household, time, money, career, and relationships

Parenting ADHD and LD Children (weekly)

Strategies and support for parents on behavior and discipline, time management, disorganization, and making friends.

ADHD and LD at School (bimonthly; weekly from August through October)

How to get classroom accommodations, finish homework, work with teachers, find the right schools, and much more.

Treating ADHD (weekly)

Treatment options for attention deficit including medications, food, supplements, brain training, mindfulness and other alternative therapies.