FREE WORKSHEET · NEURODIVERSITY

Getting Started, and Finishing

Practical ways round the tasks your brain will not begin

If you have ADHD, or a brain that works in a similar way, the hardest part of a task is often not the task. It is starting it, staying with it once the novelty wears off, and finishing the last ten per cent. This is not laziness or a lack of willpower. It is how attention, motivation and planning work in your brain.

Willpower is not the answer. Changing the set-up around the task usually is. Pick one task you have been putting off, and work through this sheet with it in mind.

IF YOU NEED HELP NOW

If there is an immediate risk to life, call **999**. The Samaritans are available free, 24 hours a day, on **116 123**. In England, NHS 111 (option 2) connects to an urgent mental health service.

01

What gets in the way

Which of these get in the way for you?

0 = not me, 1 = a little, 2 = quite often, 3 = very much me

	0	1	2	3
The task feels too big or vague to know where to begin	☐	☐	☐	☐
It is boring, so my attention slides off it	☐	☐	☐	☐
There is no deadline yet, so it never feels urgent	☐	☐	☐	☐
I lose track of time once I start something else	☐	☐	☐	☐
I start strongly, then stall halfway	☐	☐	☐	☐
Switching from one thing to another is hard	☐	☐	☐	☐
I forget it exists unless it is in front of me	☐	☐	☐	☐

02

Strategies to try

IF THE PROBLEM IS…	TRY
Too big or vague	Write the very first physical action: “open the document”, not “do the report”.
Boring	Pair it with something you like: music, a good coffee, a change of place.
No urgency	Make a deadline real: tell someone, book a time, set a visible countdown.
Losing track of time	Use a timer you can see, and set alarms for the transitions.
Stalling halfway	Stop at an easy point and write the next step down before you leave it.
Hard to switch	Give yourself a five-minute warning before you need to change task.
Out of sight, out of mind	Keep it visible: one list, on paper or on screen, in the place you look most.

Body doubling

Many people find tasks easier with someone else present, in person or on a video call, each doing their own work.

Who could I sit alongside, even virtually, for an hour this week?

Ten minutes

Agree with yourself to do ten minutes only. Starting is the hardest part, and you are allowed to stop when the timer goes.

What will I do for just ten minutes, today?

03

My plan for one task

	MY PLAN
The task	
The very first physical action	
When and where I will do it	
What will make it less boring	
What will make it feel real or urgent	
Who could help, or sit alongside me	
How I will know it is finished	

If difficulties with attention, organisation or restlessness have been with you since childhood and affect more than one part of your life, it may be worth talking to your GP about an ADHD assessment.

FURTHER READING

- Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in adults, NHS (https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/adhd-adults/)