

6 Tips to Get – and Stay – Organized!

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Organization is also about Time Management – Even when a successful organization system has been created, the person with ADHD is unlikely to maintain it without setting aside a specific time slot to maintain or straighten up an area, whether it is your room, desk, book bag or pocketbook. This time needs to be scheduled on your calendar, on a weekly basis.

Containment for ‘File by Piles’, or ‘Out of Sight, Out of Mind’ – Many people with ADHD are visual thinkers. Many have memory issues. So if there is something they are working on, or plan to work on, it is usually left out. Eventually, there is a LOT left out. Develop ways to contain projects so they are still visible, and easy to access. A favorite method is to use magazine holders for papers, labeling the front of the holder with the project or subject. You can keep a bunch of them next to each other, so it’s easy to just reach in to file or retrieve papers (related papers can be grouped in labeled, plastic project folders).

To remember what needs to be worked on when, schedule a Task-Appointment in your calendar (an appointment with yourself to do a specific task at a specific time). This takes away the stress of trying to remember, and eliminates the confusion of juggling multiple projects and tasks without clarity as to what you will do, when. Some people benefit from using a large whiteboard with current tasks, reminder alarms, post-its, or other memory-boosters.

Group Like with Like – Everything related to a specific task should be grouped together, so it is easy to retrieve. This is **organization by function**. If you want to send out greeting cards, keep the cards, stamps, envelopes, address book and a pen in one place. If you do art projects, keep the papers and drawing materials in one labeled location. This even applies to things like first aid supplies – keep them, and the book about what to do in an emergency, in one clearly-labeled and centrally-located bin or basket. Clear containers let you see what is inside. Easy to read labels save time and energy and make upkeep easier. You’ll also save money by not having to buy duplicates of things you can’t find.

Everything Needs a Home – When you want something, you should know where it ‘lives.’ When you are putting something away, if you know it has a specific home, you’re less likely to leave it ‘wherever’ then spend hours trying to remember. If the home is the wrong size, you are wasting space or risking major disorganization by having to stuff things into an overflowing drawer or container. If the home is in the wrong place, it won’t be used. It is also useful to label shelves (“cleaning supplies”) and drawers (“exercise clothes”) – another reminder to put things away where they ‘live.’

Clutter Control – Think: *Do I Love It... Do I Really Need It... Does It Hold Fond Memories...* If not, let it go. Letting go is often easier when you donate (think ‘Blessing Someone Else’ with your stuff) or recycle (repurposing those old papers). Preventing clutter is easier than eliminating it. Set personal boundaries for what to keep: Get off mailing lists, go through schoolwork right out of the book bag to see what should be kept, allow yourself ‘X’ number of plastic containers or cans of soup, and only keep or buy more when you go below that number. Mark magazines and catalogs with a date 30 days from when you receive them, and discard by that date, read or not (consider skimming publications when you receive them and just pulling out the articles you want to read).

The Right Tools – It is important to have the right tool for a job. If you have writing issues, a thicker pen with smooth-flowing ink and coated paper makes writing easier. If you need a family calendar, get one that is large enough to be effective and use colored markers for different family members. If you need more space, get stacking boxes that easily pull out. Think: *How can I make life easier?*

Sounds great, but how to do it all? *There’s a Strategy for That!*™ Ask Me!

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