

## Procrastination

Putting things off not only prevents completion of tasks, but also creates problems for others on the team. Here are some strategies for success:

- Break the task into small pieces, rewarding yourself along the way. It may be helpful to have a coach or someone else to whom you can report and be accountable for achieving each piece of the task, until you learn to overcome your tendencies to procrastinate
- Ask the supervisor to set a deadline for tasks.
- Consider working on a team with a co-worker who manages time well.

## Difficulty Managing Long Term Projects

Managing complex or long term projects may be the hardest organisational challenge for adults with ADHD. Managing projects requires a range of skills like time management, organising materials, tracking progress and communicating accomplishments. Try the following guidelines:

- Break projects up into manageable parts, with rewards for each part.
- Strive to shorten the time allowed on a project to better utilize "sprinting abilities".
- Ask a coach to assist you in tolerating longer and longer projects, a bit at a time.
- Find and partner with a co-worker with good organisational skills.
- Look for work that requires short term tasks.

## Paperwork Details

The inability to find important papers, turn in reports, timesheets and maintain a filing system can create an impression of carelessness. If paperwork is a significant part of the job try these hints:

- Make a rule to handle each piece of paper only once.
- Ask an administrative assistant to handle detailed paperwork.
- Keep only those papers that are currently in use, purge the rest.
- Make filing more fun by colour coding folders and using catchy labels.

## Interpersonal / Social Skill Issues

Individuals with ADHD may unintentionally offend co-workers by interrupting frequently, talking too much, being too blunt, or not listening well. If social skills are a challenge try the following strategies:

- Ask others for feedback, especially if there is a history of problems with colleagues and supervisors
- Learn to pick up social cues more readily. Some adults with ADHD have a hard time picking up non-verbal cues that they are angering a co-worker or supervisor.
- Work with a coach to determine what types of settings often lead to interpersonal / social issues.
- Seek a position with greater autonomy if working with others is challenging



# TIPS FOR SUCCEEDING IN THE WORKPLACE



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ADHD symptoms create special challenges for adults in the workplace, just as they do for the child at school.

Some Adults with ADHD have very successful careers. Others may struggle with a variety of challenges, including poor communication skills, distractibility, procrastination and difficulty with complex projects.

Each individual with ADHD has different challenges. This guide will provide tips for improving on-the-job functioning.

### **Distractibility**

Problems with external distractibility (noises and movement in the surrounding environment) and internal distractibility (daydreams) can be the biggest challenge for adults with ADHD. The following strategies may help:

- Request a private office or quiet cubicle, or take work home or work when others are not in the office.
- Use “white noise” earphones, classical music or other sounds to drown out office noises.
- Work in unused space, such as conference room, where distractions are few.
- Route phone calls directly to voice mail, and respond to them at a set time everyday.
- Jot down ideas in a notebook to avoid interruption of the current task.
- Keep a list of ideas that come to you during meetings so that you can communicate more effectively.
- Perform one task at a time. Do not start a new task until the current one is finished.

### **Impulsivity**

Adults with ADHD struggle with impulsivity and temper outbursts in the workplace. Try the following strategies:

- Learn to self-talk to monitor impulsive actions.
- Work with a coach to role-play appropriate responses to frustrating situations.
- Ask for regular constructive feedback as a way of becoming more aware of how impulsivity may manifest in you.
- Practise relaxation and meditation techniques.
- Anticipate the problems that regularly trigger impulsive reactions and develop routines for coping with these distractions

### **Hyperactivity**

Adults with the Hyperactive subtype of ADHD often do better in jobs that allow a great deal of movement, such as sales, but if you have a sedentary job the following strategies may help:

- Take intermittent breaks to do photocopying, go to the mailroom or to get a drink of water.
- Take notes in meetings to prevent restlessness.
- Move around, exercise, take a walk, or run up and down the stairs.
- Bring lunch instead of going out to buy it, so the lunch hour can be time for exercise.

### **Poor Memory**

Failing to remember deadlines and other responsibilities can antagonise co-workers, especially when working on a team. To improve memory try the suggestions below:

- Use tape recording devices or take copious notes during meetings.
- Write checklists for complicated tasks.
- Use a bulletin board or computer reminder lists for announcements and other memory triggers.
- Learn how to use a day planner and keep it with you to keep track of tasks and events.
- Write notes on sticky pads and put them in highly visible places.

### **Boredom Blockouts**

Because of their strong need for stimulation some adults with ADHD become easily bored at work, especially with detailed paperwork and routine tasks. To prevent boredom try these tips:

- Set a timer to stay on task.
- Break up long tasks into shorter tasks.
- Take break. drink water, get up and walk around.
- Find a job with stimulating responsibilities.

### **Time Management Difficulties**

Time managing can be a big challenge for adults with ADHD. Here are some guidelines to improve time management skills.

- Use timeline charts to break up large projects into smaller pieces with sub-due dates.
- Reward yourself for achieving sub-due dates.
- Use watch devices with alarms, buzzers, planners or computer planning software.
- Programme your computer to beep 5 minutes before every meeting on the calendar.
- Avoid overscheduling the day by overestimating how long each task or meeting will take.

