Assessing Your Space to Live Better With ADHD

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ADHD-Proof Your Life – Part 2

In part one of this series on ADHD-proofing your life we looked at setting goals, assessing your space, and the benefits of decluttering, changing your media consumption and diet.

Hopefully, the tips, suggestions and interventions included in part one made a positive change for you. If this is the case, avoid the desire to rest with moderate improvements when there is more that can be done.

Read on for even more ADHD-busting recommendations to make your home and your life ADHD-proof. The battle is far from over.

Clocks, Watches, Timers and Alarms

With ADHD, time management is a huge problem that is expressed in two ways. For one, people with ADHD have decreased patience to put towards activities that they are not interested in completing.

Whether it is a child being asked to do homework or an adult scrubbing the bathtub, your goal in any undesirable activity is to finish as quickly as possible. There is little interest in the quality of completion.

The second time management issue is that people with ADHD have an uncanny ability to hyperfocus on behaviors that interest them. Video games, social media, sports and exercising are some of the activities that will continue until something or someone interrupts.

How would you rate your time management? What people, activities and events do you want to move through as quickly as possible? Which ones take up too much of your time? Begin by identifying and assessing your tendencies to find your starting point. Next, think about how much time would be more appropriate for these activities.

After establishing your desired timeframes, begin to use the clocks, watches, timers and alarms in your home to give you feedback about your timeframes.

Clocks should be made available in all rooms of your home. Wearing a digital watch with alarms at all times can make keeping time more convenient. A new wave of wearable technology allows you to connect to your smartphone and send you multiple alerts and reminders with tones and vibrations. Leaving several kitchen timers around will increase the likelihood of their use.

As mentioned, people with ADHD seem to have decreased ability to accurately track time. Because of this, adding more visual, audio and tactile reminders will aid your ability to keep a schedule.

For example, you want to play video games for an hour. You know that your typical video game session is

usually four hours so you place a clock in your field of vision to remind you of current time. You can glance down at your watch for another level of prompting, and the kitchen timer ticking beside you gives the audio cues.

Next page: assessing your space in the bedroom and car.

Clocks, Watches, Timers and Alarms

If you are serious about changing your ADHD habits, there is no such thing as too many clocks.

Avoid using your phone as the only time keeper in your life. There is no doubt that its accessibility is a plus and the range of tasks it can complete is impressive. The issue comes from the lack of diversification. With your smartphone, all of your eggs are in one basket. This is never a positive in the world of mental health.

In the Bedroom

The bedroom deserves special attention and focus as sleep is hugely important to someone with ADHD. You need to capitalize on the rejuvenating and reorganizing powers of sleep.

With the right amount of sleep, your body and brain will function better than before. Just as you assessed your living spaces in part one of this series, assess your bedroom to ADHD-proof it.

Does it look like a place where someone sleeps or does it look like a place someone eats, watches TV and surfs the internet? Sleep hygiene involves utilizing good habits and practices to improve the quality of sleep. This notion is incredibly important to those with ADHD since bad habits usually spill over into the bedroom.

Your bedroom should be bare and void of distractions. This means removing your TV, computer and phone. Your bedroom only needs your bed and an alarm clock to keep you aware of the time.

This may seem shocking as you think that sleeping is not a problem or that you could never fall asleep without the TV in the background. The truth is that any stimulation will serve as a distraction as you try to fall asleep. Additionally, the flickering lights and sounds disturb your rest in ways that you may not even realize.

Just because you are used to a lower quality sleep does not mean that it is good for you. Experiment to find how good your sleep can be.

In the Car

You likely spend some time driving in a car. Though driving is a normal and mundane activity, it is one that carries some level of risk. The risk can be minimized by maintaining your attention throughout the duration of your travels.

The process to ADHD-proof your car starts as it did when ADHD-proofing your home. You need to assess, declutter and sort. Are the old food wrappers, water bottles and tissue packets helping or hindering your driving skills? Focus on keeping the inside of your car streamlined and efficient to stay safe.

Next page: more tips for improving the space in your vehicle.

In the Car

One of the biggest contributors to poor attention in the car impacts everyone: the cell phone. Create a plan on how to handle your phone while in the car. Perhaps, you can trust yourself to make calls while others must leave it in their pocket or purse because it is too distracting.

If you use your phone for directions or music when driving, look into purchasing a dock that mounts on the dashboard or windshield. This device can hold your phone in a safe position while maintaining its usefulness. Going hands-free encourages your attention and concentration.

Sunglasses are another common distraction when driving. You may be reaching under your seat or behind you when the sun shines bright. Maybe you have too many pairs that have accumulated over the months that you fumble through to find the right pair.

In either case, you can benefit from establishing one pair as your driving sunglasses. Keep them in the car in the same location to build a safe routine. There are a number of products that can clip your shades to the sun visor to simplify the process.

Driving music can increase your attention but excessively scanning through the stations leads to a higher risk of inattention and broken concentration in the car. Before you leave your driveway, plan what music you would like to listen to and how it will be accessed.

Reduce the number of times you change the station and skip to another track or only do this when stopped. This keeps your eyes on the road. Adorning your dashboard with a note or sticker that prompts you to focus and stay alert could be a welcomed addition if old habits prove hard to break.

Another set of potential distractions are the people in the passenger seats. To avoid inattention and ensure your ADHD-proof car, communicate your expectations to your passengers before the car is in drive.

Let them know that your ADHD creates problems in the car. Share with them your desire to have them sit calmly and quietly during the trip. If they try to show you something out the window or on their phone, politely refuse and remind them of your need to concentrate on the task at hand.

If your children create backseat chaos, create an organized stockpile of books and activities to keep them occupied for the drive.

Conclusion

Throughout your life, there are many opportunities for inattention, poor concentration and impulsivity. There is always another distraction waiting to get you off task. Taking an inventory of your life and your surroundings are fantastic steps towards symptom management. Now your home and car are ADHD-proof, what’s next?