Three ADHD-Friendly Ways to Get Organized

by CHRISTINE LEE

ADHD and Organization: Three Ways to Get Organized With ADHD

Organization is a great thing, really. Plan ahead and save time. A place for everything and everything in its place. Terrific concept isn't it? So why do ADHDers have such a hard time applying these concepts?

It isn't that organization is a bad word to us, or that we all universally hate it, or even because we are all anarchists at heart. It's just something that we don't know how to do very well or we want to do perfectly. We're too busy with being busy, fighting off distractions of every make and model and, well, we simply just forget.

Sometimes items end up in piles rather than where they belong, and important stuff like car keys, wallets, and purses get misplaced. We spend an hour looking for one certain thing and are positive that it's somewhere nearby, we just can't locate it at the present moment. Life becomes chaotic and relationships a struggle.

But it doesn't have to be like this.

Mornings are my biggest organization foe. I hate them more than I hate Brussels sprouts. This is how I avoid chasing my tail and put a stop to the drama before it starts. It's time to free your mind from the extra junk.

ADHD and Getting Organized

Getting organized with ADHD all begins with developing a routine. By having a daily ADHD routine plan structured into your life, you may find a sense of organization in your life. From using color-coded post-it notes to planning ten minutes at night for tomorrow's tasks – you'll also, and hopefully, be able to get organized with ADHD too!

Post-it Notes

I love them and think they are awesome. I use them with my own color-coded system for a quick, at a glance rundown. Red is for jotting down my thoughts when I get interrupted and don't want to forget whatever it was that I was musing on, yellow is for bills that have to be paid ASAP (like the next day), and green is for my grocery lists. You get the idea.

At the time of the writing of this article, I'm actually lining my post-its up by the front door, where I can't miss them. The fail-safe to this method is that even if I do miss the obvious, my son or partner won't, and will point them out as we are getting ready to head out.

Some people like to use a day planner in conjunction with their notes. I applaud them, as this is a level of organization I've yet to achieve personally.

Next page: Household organization tips and planning for tomorrow.

Two Hooks, Four Baskets

As soon as I walk through the door and before I so much as breathe a sigh of relief for having made it to the relative safety of my abode, I hang my keys on the hook beside the front door. Conveniently placed next to the line of post-it notes, the keys will remain on their hook until it's time once more, to run hither and yon.

Nothing, but nothing, comes before that action. It took quite some time to make that a habit, but I'm very glad I did. Gone are the terrible, horrible, no good, and very sad mornings of frantically looking everywhere for missing keys.

The second hook further down on the wall is for my son's backpack and clarinet and whatever else he's dragged home. As long as the item in question is not alive, on the hook it shall go, until it's time for homework. But as soon as homework is done, it returns to the hook.

Next come the baskets. Still inside the foyer, I have four small baskets on a table. The first is for incoming mail, the second is for outgoing mail, the third and fourth are for my purse, and his wallet.

The idea is that as soon as we come through the door everything of importance that might get misplaced is now where we know we can find it, every time.

Take Ten Minutes at Night

Now that the important things are hung up and in their respective baskets, what else can there be to become more organized? What about taking a few minutes each night to set out the next day's clothes you and your family plan to wear?

It may sound ridiculous, but it really can save some wear and tear on your sanity. For instance. If you oversleep, you're fully aware that it's already going to be a chaotic morning but at least you don't have to worry about having to rush around, trying to put together an outfit that doesn't clash or isn't wrinkled.

Speaking of possibly oversleeping and having to rush to join the upstream swim to school and then work, how about breakfast? Did you forget about that? Why not take the other few minutes and set out the boxes of cereal, bowls, and spoons – or the poptarts – on the counter for in the morning?

I set up the coffee in the coffee maker so that all I need do when I stumble into the kitchen in the morning is press one little button to start the java and then push one lever down on the toaster. Having food and coffee ready to shove towards the raging horde when they stomp down angrily, in protest of the early morning hour, really helps. Food does quiet the cranky.

Simple Steps to Sanity

Organization. The idea is to make life easier for yourself and those around you by taking a few extra steps and planning ahead. I'll be the very first to admit that not every day is a wonderful day, or that I remember to put my purse where it's supposed to be, nor will I say that I always, without fail, make sure I take my nightly ten minutes to do my preflight checklist. If I did, I'd be lying.

I have learned however, that by taking the time to hang up my keys, make sure my son hangs up his backpack, after he's completed his homework and it's safely inside the bag, back on his hook, and to do a little prep work for the coming day does make the next day go much better.

And having mornings that start off smoothly versus the chaos of trying to hunt down errant car keys, the occasional bout of runaway homework and suffering through having to wear outfits that should never be worn out of the house-ever-is worth the time it takes to make a few sanity-saving habits. Trust me.