



Managing inattention and hyperactivity

Many living with ADHD report significant struggles with inattention and hyperactivity. This leaflet outlines some coping strategies and self-help tools to manage the condition.

Interpersonal skills, emotion regulation and distress tolerance


If you are struggling with overwhelming feelings, emotional regulation, extreme mood changes and/or self-destructive behaviours that get in the way of work, relationships or living a fulfilling life, you may benefit from learning self-help skills.

Self-help does not always mean “by yourself.” Communicate with people in your life for help with difficult tasks. Some people use an adult coach to help them organise and prioritise. There are also self-help groups to join, in which people share frustrations, successes, and tips for what works.


[Get Self Help](#)

Useful tools


You do not have to be perfect – making progress in any of the following areas will help to relieve the stress associated with managing your ADHD.




Develop routines/balance



Check in with yourself



Manage your environment



Exercise regularly



Eat a healthy diet



Mindfulness and meditation



Get plenty of sleep



Support at work



Develop routines and balance

Routines provide stability and predictability. Having general routines for **what you do, when you do it, and how you do it** is a key component of self-help for adults. People with ADHD can hyperfocus, which shows that you can and do concentrate, but sometimes this hyperfocus can come at the expense of other areas, which are ignored. This can be related to work, relationships, self-care, and more.

Lack of balance exacerbates inattention and/or hyperactivity. Determining your **strengths and weaknesses, interests and disinterests** will help you design routines that work.



Manage your environment

Use your senses to **create better conditions in your environment** to promote concentration. Some people like music, others prefer background noise, while some just like it quiet. The same is true of varying light levels.

Experiment with several **types and levels of sensory stimulation**. Make your surroundings work for you by customising your sensory input.



Check in with yourself

Tune into **both body and mind**. Both inattention and hyperactivity can cause people to have difficulty focusing on and noticing cues. These aren't just cues from the outside world; they come from the inner world too. This means that you might not notice things like hunger, thirst, or fatigue until it is extreme, and you are at meltdown level.

Make it a regular **habit to check in with yourself during the day**. Do a body scan to assess your physical condition in the moment, then do something about it. This is an effective way to take care of yourself and prevent symptoms from overpowering you.



Exercise regularly

Exercising is effective to reduce symptoms. Physical activity **boosts dopamine, norepinephrine, and serotonin** levels in the brain - all of which affect focus and attention.

Exercise decreases excess energy and aggression, quiets noise within the mind and soothes the body. It is a great tool for promoting calm.



Eat a healthy diet

Your diet influences your mood, energy levels and symptoms. It's important that you eat regularly, so **set consistent snack and mealtimes**. Adding more omega-3 fatty acids to your diet and making sure you are getting enough zinc, iron, and magnesium can also greatly benefit your wellbeing.

[NHS.co.uk](https://www.nhs.co.uk)



Get plenty of sleep

Regular, quality sleep can have a vast improvement on your wellbeing. Simple changes to daytime habits go a long way toward resting well at night. **Have a set bedtime and stick to it**, and try to avoid using screens (phones, tablets etc.) before bedtime.

[NHS.co.uk](https://www.nhs.co.uk)



Mindfulness and meditation

The benefits of mindfulness and meditation include a better **ability to focus, improved memory, emotional regulation, ability to cope with stress, and better relationships** with others - all of which can be challenging for adults living with inattention and/or hyperactivity.

You may find it helpful to practise mindfulness/meditation online through apps (i.e. Headspace, Insight Timer and/or Calm)

[Free Mindfulness](#)

Support in the workplace

Gov.uk

Talk to your employer about changes they must make in your workplace

[Click here](#)

Access to work

Government support in the workplace

[Click here](#)

ADHD support resources

AADD-UK

The site for and by adults with ADHD

[Click here](#)

ADDA

Empowering adults with ADHD

[Click here](#)

ADDISS

ADHD Information Services

[Click here](#)

ADHD Foundation

The neurodiversity health and education service

[Click here](#)

Disclaimer: These resources are shared to provide information and help with your reported symptoms/presentations. This does not confirm a diagnosis.