



10 study tips for students with ADHD

Some of the characteristics of ADHD really make life as a student challenging.

Here are our top 10 tips for studying with ADHD.

These are ideas to try, rather than rules. ADHD varies from person to person, looks different in adulthood than childhood, and appears differently in women than men.

[View the summary](#)

Work on one thing at a time

People with ADHD can get overwhelmed easily and may find it difficult to work out a way forward when facing lots of different options. You don't need to, and can't, become super-productive overnight. **Choose the area that is causing you the most difficulty**, then try one idea to improve it. Always evaluate the idea before trying anything else.



Stop beating yourself up

You aren't a failure and you certainly aren't lazy. Medication can be helpful, but it's not a magic wand. It takes a while to get right and, depending on your medication, will wear off at different rates and at different times. When joining a new place of learning, you'll be in a completely new environment; it is a huge transition and **you'll need to work out how to be productive.**



Make time visible

ADHD can make you insensitive to how much time is passing. Minutes, hours, days and weeks can pass in the blink of an eye.

Externalise time by having a wall calendar with days you can mark off, clocks with clear and readable dials, wearing a wristwatch, or using timers during study periods. These types of external prompts remind you of how much time is passing, help stop time slipping away from you, and **help you evaluate your progress** against your goals.



Get a good time management system

Digital organisation systems are great, but they only work if you remember to open them and use them.

If online calendars and Gantt charts aren't working for you, make it physical. **Try a large-scale printout for your wall, a whiteboard/magnetic drywipe** (or even hand-drawn lining paper) or a journal (hello bullet journal method). **Talk to your tutor** about how you can plan your work and ask your **fellow students** how they go about planning.



Make yourself accountable

People with ADHD can resist routine, but it is phenomenally helpful in staying on top of things and helping you manage your time. Attending your lectures and going to optional seminars and tutorials is one of the most constructive habits you can make. Try to stick to your planned timetable, and participate in synchronous sessions – this will help you **develop a daily routine, stay connected and help you judge how you are doing.**



Outside the timetable, get a **study partner/study group**. Find someone who will understand what your goals are and know whether you are achieving them or not.

The sooner you admit out loud that you're going off-course, the sooner you can get back on track.



Limit extra commitments

Extra-curricular activities are important for your mental and physical wellbeing. However, **ADHD can mean you're impulsive and like starting new activities**, so you might sign up for a whole bunch of clubs that make demands on your time and mean you have made more commitments than you can fulfil. **So, don't jump in too quickly**, and balance activities that require a regular long-term commitment with those you can dip in and out of.



Be open to new ideas

If you have ADHD and you are faced with work that you think is boring and repetitive, it is unbelievably difficult to concentrate on it. How you respond to this will be personal. **Doodling, note taking and use of colour in notes helps**, as do concept maps to help so I understand how ideas are related to one another. You can add to these as you go along.

For revision, or working on assignments, try the Pomodoro technique. Above all, **remember why you are doing what you're doing**.



Ask for help if you need it

If you have long reading lists and you don't know what is essential/not essential, or your module content is not broken up into chunks that you can use for planning, **do ask your module leader for help**. This is a completely reasonable request, and students with other conditions (for example, Dyslexia) will be asking this too.



Look after yourself

If you have prescribed medication, take it. Keep up with your medical appointments – this is a critical part of your support system. Don't self-medicate with alcohol or other drugs.



Let yourself shine

Because of those strengths mentioned earlier, there will be times in your course where **you will absolutely shine**. Allow yourself to enjoy these – not everything is a struggle, and you should be learning a lot about your strengths at university too.

Reflecting on your successes and strengths gives some important balance to the frustrations and worry you'll feel, but it's also helpful in learning about yourself so you can make more informed future career decisions.

Support for university

NUS

The National Union of Students

[Click here](#)

DSA UK

Disabled Students' Allowance

[Click here](#)

Kooth

Online mental wellbeing community

[Click here](#)

General support

Psychiatry UK

The UK's leading online psychiatric service

[Click here](#)

NHS

Helping you take control of your wellbeing

[Click here](#)



Study tips summary

1

Work on one thing at a time.

People with ADHD get overwhelmed easily. **Choose areas that cause you the most difficulty**, and try to improve them one at a time.

2

Stop beating yourself up.

You aren't a failure, you aren't lazy! School to university is a huge transition, you'll need to find new ways to manage.

3

Make time visible.

Minutes, hours and days pass in a blink of an eye. **Externalise time.** Try a wall calendar, easy-to-read clocks, use timers.

4

Time management.

Try a large-scale **printout for your wall**, whiteboards or journals. Talk to your tutor and fellow students for advice.

5

Be accountable.

From a daily schedule, join a study group or find a good study partner. **Admit out loud** that you're going off-course.

6

Limit commitments.

With your impulsivity, you may sign up for multiple extra activities. **Don't jump too quickly and try to balance activities.**

7

Be open to ideas.

Doodling, note taking and use of colour in notes. Above all, remember **why you are doing what you're doing.**

8

Ask for help.

Ask your **module leader or lecturers for help** on what is essential and what is not. This is a completely reasonable request.

9

Look after yourself.

If you have prescribed **medication**, **remember to take it.** Keep up with your medical appointments. Don't self-medicate.

10

Let yourself shine.

There will be times where you absolutely shine. **Enjoy these moments** and reflect on your successes and strengths.

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