



Ballast adult ADHD toolkit

Getting Unstuck

Practical tools for task initiation, procrastination, and momentum.

Make the start smaller

Find the smallest door

Finish the report

Open the report

Write one rough sentence

Useful on a real Tuesday.

Practical, psychologically informed tools for building a life that works with your brain.

Procrastination is not one thing

What is the task asking your brain to do?

Choose the nearest fit. Different barriers need different doors.

Unclear

I cannot see the first action. Define the next visible move.

Too large

The task has no edges. Create a 10-minute slice.

Boring

The reward is too distant. Add immediacy or company.

Threatening

It could expose failure or conflict. Separate action from verdict.

Too many choices

Every option branches again. Reduce to A or B.

Low fuel

The brain cannot finance the start. Stabilize, then choose.

Lower the entry cost

The first action should be almost annoyingly small

You are not shrinking the importance of the task. You are shrinking the distance to contact.

Illustrative example	Your version
Too big Finish the report	Too big
Still big Work on the report	Still big
Visible Open the report	Visible
Tiny Read the last paragraph	Tiny
Entry point Write one rough sentence	Entry point

My task, stepped down until the first action feels possible

 Borrow momentum

Choose one support, not seven

The goal is contact with the task. Novelty is helpful until choosing the method becomes the new task.

Body double

Work near another person or announce the block.

Five-minute door

Commit to five minutes, with permission to stop.

Visible timer

Make time concrete and finite.

Sound cue

Use one repeatable start playlist or sound.

Friction off

Open files, gather tools, clear one square foot.

Reward now

Pair the start with coffee, music, or a check mark.

Ugly first pass

Produce something deliberately incomplete.

Accountability text

Send: Starting X now. I will update at __.

My default ignition

When I notice I am stuck, I will use:

When the task feels dangerous

Name the predicted pain

Avoidance often protects against shame, uncertainty, conflict, disappointment, or loss of control.

The task I am avoiding is...

If I begin, I fear...

What is fact, and what is prediction?

What would a good-enough attempt look like?

A steadier sentence

This task may be uncomfortable. It is not a referendum on my worth. My job is the next honest action.

Define done before you start

Completion needs an edge

If done keeps moving, the brain never receives the reward of arrival.

The outcome

Good enough for this version

What I am explicitly not doing today

☐ I can stop when the defined version is complete.

☐ I left one breadcrumb if another pass is needed.

Completion ritual

Save. Send or file. Mark done. Take 30 seconds to notice that the task ended.

 Repair, do not prosecute

A missed task needs information and a next move

Self-attack consumes the same executive capacity needed for repair.

- | | | | |
|----------|---|----------|--|
| 1 | Notice
What happened, without adjectives? | 2 | Learn
Which barrier was present? |
| 3 | Repair
Who or what needs attention? | 4 | Redesign
What support changes next time? |

The facts

The repair I can make

The support I will add

Use + evidence / Keep the tool, drop the verdict

Support, not a scorecard

These pages are experiments. A tool that does not help is data about fit, timing, context, or support needs. It is not evidence that you are lazy or incapable.

This resource is educational

It is not a diagnostic test or a substitute for individualized medical or psychological care. ADHD can overlap with anxiety, depression, trauma, sleep disorders, substance use, learning differences, and medical conditions. If symptoms are new, worsening, or unsafe, talk with a qualified healthcare professional.

The evidence base behind the design

Current guidance supports multimodal care tailored to the person and environment. Medication and psychosocial interventions, including cognitive behavioral approaches, may be useful. Environmental modifications, planning and organization skills, sleep, movement, and ongoing monitoring can support day-to-day functioning. No worksheet replaces comprehensive care.

Selected sources

[CDC. ADHD in Adults \(reviewed Sept. 2026\).](#)

[NIMH. Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder \(ADHD\).](#)

[NICE Guideline NG87. Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder: diagnosis and management.](#)

[AADPA. Australian Evidence-Based Clinical Practice Guideline for ADHD.](#)

[Faraone et al. World Federation of ADHD International Consensus Statement. 2021.](#)

Urgent support

If you may harm yourself or someone else, call or text 988 in the United States, call 911, or go to the nearest emergency department.