

Less stuck. More started.

12 practical tools for real life. Pick the snag. Try one tool. Adjust as needed.

Starting is hard? 01-03 • Focus keeps wandering? 04-06

01 The task feels huge

Shrink the first step

Name one visible action you can do in two minutes. Start there; decide on the next step afterward.

"Do taxes" → "Find last year's return."

02 The path is fuzzy

Work backward

Describe what "done" looks like. Ask: what must happen just before that? Repeat until you reach a first action.

Your goal needs a staircase, not a cape.

03 Everything feels urgent

Choose one "now"

Write NOW / NEXT / LATER. Put one doable task in NOW. Check real deadlines before choosing.

A list is a menu. You needn't eat it all.

04 Focus feels endless

Give it a finish line

Set a visible timer for a short work sprint, perhaps 10 minutes. Choose one task; take a brief break when it rings.

Too long? Try five. This is not the Olympics.

05 Distractions keep winning

Clear the runway

Put your phone out of reach, close extra tabs, and set out the supplies for this task. Keep needed alerts on.

Make the useful thing the easy thing.

06 Your brain opens 37 tabs

Park the side quests

Keep a scrap of paper nearby. Jot down unrelated thoughts, return to the task, then review the list after your sprint.

Yes, the idea counts. No, not all at once.

The one-tool experiment

When _____ happens, I'll try tool # _____ for one small task.

Afterward: Did it help? Keep it, shrink it, or change it. No character verdict required.

Let the tools remember.

Your brain has enough open tabs. Give time, tasks, and belongings a home.

Forgetting? 07-08, 10 • Timing or follow-through? 09, 11-12

07 Good intentions vanish

Use one capture spot

Put incoming tasks in one notebook or app. Review it at a reliable daily cue; pick what needs action or scheduling.

"I'll remember" has left the group chat.

09 Time does its weird thing

Plan the leaving time

Work backward from arrival: subtract travel, preparation, and a buffer. Set a get-ready alarm and a leave alarm.

Travel time is not the whole adventure.

11 The routine won't stick

Attach it to a cue

Choose an existing routine. Write: "After I ____, I will ____." Keep the new action tiny; put a visual cue in its path.

After coffee brews → check my calendar.

08 Appointments sneak up

Make reminders actionable

Use one main calendar. Add reminders early enough to act, with the action in the label. Test that alerts reach you.

"2:15: shoes on; leave for dentist."

10 The keys have a secret life

Build a launch pad

Choose a visible home near the door for keys, bag, and essentials. Return them there; pack tomorrow's items tonight.

One basket. Fewer archaeological digs.

12 The payoff feels far away

Bring the reward closer

Choose a small, enjoyable reward for a defined step. Use it soon after the step, with a return cue if work continues.

Send the email → one favorite song.

Missed a day? Restart at the next cue. Skip the guilt-powered catch-up marathon.

These tools support daily functioning; they do not replace individualized ADHD care. The time suggestions are starting points. Keep food, rest, and other basic needs available regardless of productivity.

Learn more: [NIMH: ADHD overview & tips](#) • [CHADD: To-do lists](#)

Practical examples by Ballast. Tools are not ranked; different people need different supports.