

GET FOCUSED WITH ADHD:

**Practical Strategies for
Everyday**



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Introduction

As an ADHD Coach, people frequently ask me for tips and strategies to help manage ADHD symptoms. I developed *Get Focused with ADHD: Practical Strategies for Everyday* to help you identify strategies and reminders that can move you forward and help you reach your ADHD-related goals.

Get Focused with ADHD: Practical Strategies for Everyday compiles the most popular and useful tips that you can implement to improve your everyday life. I encourage you to review each tip and implement the ones that work the best for you. Commit to trying something new each day for at least a month to *Get Focused*. Throughout the book you will find hyperlinks to original posts at www.MyAttentionCoach.com or other related resources. Have fun exploring!

Please share your feedback with me at Laura@MyAttentionCoach.com or on Twitter [@LauraRolands](https://twitter.com/LauraRolands).

Sincerely,

Laura

Laura Rolands
ADHD Coach and Consultant
My Attention Coach

1 | Focus on Building Your Foundation

ADHD can cause challenges with getting focused.

Committing to learn strategies to improve your focus with ADHD is a great way to build the foundation for your success. There is no need to try all the strategies all at once. I encourage you to learn and implement 3 new strategies to help you gain more focus. Make a plan to stick with it for 66 days. It may take that long for a habit to form.

Educate Yourself to Get Focused

Educate yourself from reliable sources to help you focus on the impact that ADHD has on you personally. A few of my favorites are [ADD Classes](#), [Children and Adults with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder](#), [Help4ADHD](#), [Attention Deficit Disorder Association](#) and, of course, [My Attention Coach](#). As you consider other sources, be sure that they are reputable and research-based.

2 | Set Useful Goals to Focus on Priorities

A few questions for you...

- What resolutions did you set at the beginning of the year?
- Which of those resolutions are related to your ADHD?
- Are you sticking to those resolutions?

I get frustrated when I hear people talk about resolutions. I prefer the concept of goals to resolutions. Clear goals can do much more to move you to your successful vision than resolutions that are so easy to declare on New Years Day (...and forget by Valentine's Day). To get focused, set personal, professional and academic goals for yourself. Keep those goals posted in a visible place to stay focused.

Whether it is getting organized, staying focused, starting a new project or something else that I have not contemplated, you owe it to yourself to get focused.

To start, take some time to make sure your goal is SMART.

Specific: Make your goal specific enough so that you know when you attain your goal. After you identify a goal, ask yourself whether or not you know what success looks like.

Measurable: Goals that you can objectively measure are ideal. Even if you cannot identify an objective measurement, you can make a rating scale for your goal.

Attainable: Review your goal and make sure it is attainable in a reasonable amount of time. If not, break it into smaller, more attainable steps.

Relevant: Is your goal relevant to you? If not, adjust it to make it as relevant as possible.

Timely: Set a realistic deadline that will push you a bit. Honor that deadline.

Next, focus on action steps that you can develop from the rest of the chapters. What is ONE step you can take today towards that goal? Remember, it all starts with ONE step.

[Review Goals to Get Focused](#)

ADHD can cause trouble staying focused on your goals, especially annual goals that are set early in the year. Review your goals regularly to get yourself focused. Doing so can refresh you on personal and professional priorities for the current year.

Conducting Your Goal Review

To review your goals, ask yourself the following questions:

- What progress have I made towards my goal?
- What adjustments do I need to make regarding my goal?
- What milestones can I set to ensure I am making progress to meet my goal?
- How can I keep my goals present for myself in my day-to-day activities?

3 | Time Management Strategies

ADHD causes many adults to experience struggles with time management. The strategies in this chapter will help you overcome some of those challenges.

Simplify

Does ADHD get in your way of focusing? Do you have too many personal and professional activities? Do you waste time looking for your work?

Simplify something in your life today to help you focus on the priorities. What is one thing you can simplify today to help you focus? Make it happen and you will experience more success on what is important!

What will you simplify?

Use Timers to Arrive on Time

Set two timers to help you arrive on time when you have ADHD. The first one sounds when you need to prepare to leave your office or house. Second one sounds when you need to leave for an appointment.

Make Routines to Help Manage Your Time

Pick one area of your day where you seem to frequently lose focus. Make a routine for yourself to help you get focused and manage your time more effectively. Here are a few ideas to get you started.

- Does it take longer to get ready in the morning than you would like?
- Do you get to bed later than you want?
- Does it take forever to make dinner?
- Do the kids need a lot of management to get out of the house?
- Do you dread getting ready to study?

These are all areas where making a routine can help. For help, check out my article [Making Routines Work as an Adult](#).

What routine can you develop?

4 | Putting Organization into Focus with ADHD

What motivation do you need to get organized?

Develop rewards and other motivators that will help you get organized. If you have ADHD, identifying rewards that are meaningful to you is very important. If they are not meaningful to you, change them!

Organize to Get Focused

Does clutter get in your way when trying to focus?

Getting organized can go along way to help you focus. I know though that if you have ADHD, it can be somewhat overwhelming to get organized. To help improve your focus and keep the overwhelm away, try starting small. Is there one area of your desk, kitchen counter, table or other work area that you can start organizing? Try starting with one small area and work to organize it for a short time. If 15 minutes sounds reasonable, set a timer and get organizing. If that sounds too long, start with 10 minutes – or even 5!

Where do you need to organize?

5 | Taming Your “To Do” List

Prioritize to Get Focused

Prioritizing can help you get focused.

To Do List

Think about your To Do list. Even if you have not written one in a while, think about the last time you wrote one. Chances are you have too much on that list. It seems as though our personal and professional to do lists can be never ending. This, as you know, can be overwhelming. To help you focus, identify the priorities on your list. What are the top 3 MUST DO items on the list for today? Focus on them to increase your chances of accomplishing them.

Goals

On a broader scale, the same concept applies to our goals. There may be many on our list. You can help yourself focus if you prioritize your goals by importance and/or timing. Use a matrix like the one below to categorize your goals.

High			
Low			
	Next 2 months	3 - 6 months	More than 6 months

Manage Your Email to Get Focused

Email can be overwhelming with ADHD. Each one is a new interruption and it takes time to refocus after you are done reading.

Check your email only a couple times each day and close it when you are finished. The distractions and interruptions can really decrease when you do this and you can save time! In addition, delete emails as soon as possible so they do not clutter your inbox.

Verbs Help Your To Do List

When writing your to do list, start each item with a verb. “Write blog article” gives more focus than “blog article”. “Write Letter to Laura Rolands” tells you more than “Laura”. Add your ideas in the comments section. We could get a great list going here!

Delete From Your To Do List (Get Focused)

Yes, I still want you to make your To Do list. When you are done, answer this question:

“What can I delete from the list?”

You can take a weight off your shoulders and focus on your higher priorities even if you just eliminate one of your lower priorities from your list.

Estimate Time to Get Focused

If you have ADHD, estimating the time it takes to get your work done can be difficult. On the one hand, you may underestimate the time that certain tasks will take. This can leave you overwhelmed with too much on your plate and not enough time to get it all done. On the other hand, you might overestimate the time that something will take to complete. If this happens, you might notice yourself with open, unproductive time or your efficiency might decrease causing you to take too much time to complete the assignment.

Estimating Time on Your Task List

To help you improve in this skill, I recommend that you get in the habit of estimating how much time a task will take to complete at the beginning of each day. At the end of the day, go back to your to do list and note the actual time that something took. Review your accuracy and reflect on where you can improve your estimating the next time.

This will take practice! I encourage you to try this for a few weeks and see if your estimating skills improve. Do not give up quickly. This is something that takes some time before you will begin to see results.

Start a Tickler File to Get Focused

ADHD can make it hard to manage all of the paper you get at home and/or work. Using a tickler file can be a helpful way to gain control of the paper.

First you will need an accordion folder with numbered tabs 1 – 31.

When you receive a new piece of paper that is time sensitive, write the date that you need to take action on the top of the paper. For example, if I get a bill that is due on February 10th, I would write February 8th on top of the paper to ensure I have time to make an electronic payment.

File the paper behind the tab with the corresponding date. With my bill example above, I will put the paper behind tab 8.

Check the tickler file once each day to see what paper needs to be handled.

6 | Managing the Family with ADHD

Family Calendars

Use a family calendar either electronically or on paper to ensure everyone has a view of everyone else's commitments. If you have kids, it can be especially helpful to get them involved in the planning process at a young age.

Get Focused on Phone Calls

What phone calls have you been delaying? Identify at least one today that you can make and check off your to do list today. This accomplishment might be just what you needed to get focused today.

Can't think of a phone call you need to make? Check the list below to double-check!

- Appointments
 - Doctor
 - Tutor
 - Dentist
- School scheduling
- Sick friend
- Family member needing your support
- Orthodontist consultation (this one was on my list for MONTHS! – felt good to get it scheduled)
- Lawn service
- Summer plans

Just pick one and get it done today.

7 | ADHD and Household Responsibilities

~ [Paying Bills](#) ~

Set aside time to pay bills. If your ADHD makes paying bills a chore you would prefer to avoid, scheduling some time to get started can help. If this sounds overwhelming to you, think about how spending 30 minutes would work for you. A short amount of time might be just what you need to get started.

[Plan Meals](#) and [Make a Grocery List](#)

Do you forget to buy groceries and spend too much money on fast food? Maybe you make it to the grocery store, but make unhealthy choices when you get there. ADHD can make impulse buys a challenge also.

To help you stay focused, spend some time TODAY planning your menu and making a grocery list. You can also keep a running list for a few days and plan a shopping day later in the week when you have some additional time.

[Take Action](#)

Do you have a household project to tackle? Does it seem overwhelming? While I do recommend that you plan your projects, I also recognize that you can sometimes get stuck in the planning stage. If you feel stuck in the planning stage, decide to just take action. Pick one thing you can do to move forward and set the timer to start.

Plan to Get Focused

Take a few minutes and make a schedule for the week. You will accomplish more if you make a plan. If you need help choosing your planner, check out my free [special report](#) to help.

Whether you have ADHD or not, you can increase your chances of getting more done when you have a plan.

Spend 10 Minutes

If planning is something new for you or if you really do not like doing it, start small. Spend just 10 minutes and see if it helps you get more done.

Plan Weekends Too!

Use your planner or a piece of paper and write down the top 5 things you need to accomplish this weekend.

Estimate how much time it will take to accomplish each.

At the end of the weekend, look back at your list and see if your estimates were accurate. What did you learn and how can you adjust your plan the next time?

Start the Laundry

As you read this tip, do you have laundry that needs washing? Start that load of laundry as soon as you can.

If you tend to forget about putting it in the dryer, try one of these tips:

- Carry a dryer sheet with you until you move the laundry to the dryer.
- Set TWO timers to help you remember to put the laundry in the dryer.
- Put a note on the door into your house to remind you.
- Put a note on the microwave door.

Say No to Get Focused

Practice Saying No if you Have ADHD

Do you overcommit when others ask for help? Identify some strategies to politely say no when you cannot afford to take on any additional responsibilities. This can really help you Get Focused.

If you find that over commitment gets in your way of focusing, consider figuring out how to say no more often. Identify some strategies to politely say no when you cannot afford to take on any additional responsibilities. This can really help you Get Focused.

Here are a couple ideas to get you started:

- When asked to join another committee say, “Thank you for considering me for the committee, but I just have too much on my plate right now.”
- When a family member asks you to take on a new responsibility, say, “I’m sorry, I just can’t do this one. Can you check with me next time?”

Just One More Thing

Do you ever run into a challenge when you try to do “just one more thing” before working on your priority items? Sometimes this can happen when you are trying to leave for an appointment. I call this “one-more-thing-itis”! Try to resist the urge and see how it helps you to get focused. For example, you may not want to check email or Facebook when you have five minutes to spare.

8 | Refocus to See the Positive

Positive Self-talk

When you have ADHD, it might seem like you hear a lot of negative feedback. Much of this feedback may even be from you.

There are many different names for this, but the name is not important. It is simply that voice in your head that tends to tell you what you cannot do. If this is the case for you, chances are that this can affect the focus you need to work on your goals and other priorities.

Take a minute and see what you can reframe from a positive direction. How can you make that voice give you some positive feedback?

Using Strengths

I encourage you to use your strengths to help you get focused each day. Using your strengths can help you to gain confidence to achieve your goals and overcome your challenges. To help you focus and manage any ADHD challenges that you may have, spend 5 minutes today focusing on your strengths. Set a timer first so you can get back to other priorities at the assigned time!

Put it on your to do list so you don't lose site of this important aspect of getting focused.

Reflect on Strengths

Having trouble identifying your strengths. Consider one of the questions below to help you get started!

- What went well yesterday? How can you make it happen today?
- What do you love to do? How will you work it into your day?
- What comes easy to you?
- How can you take something that comes easy to you and apply it to your challenges?
- How else do you identify your strengths? Share your ideas!

Monitor Success

Working to achieve your goals?

Monitor your success to Get Focused on your goals. By doing so, you will be reminded to work towards your goals and you will be able to celebrate the small wins. By focusing on small successes, you can help yourself build momentum towards your larger goals.

Some Tools to Help Monitor Success

- Keep a journal – write down one success each day
- Use a calendar – enter one accomplishment each day
- Make a special checklist to keep track
- Talk to a friend for a mini-celebration

[Get Focused on the Positive](#)

Do you have trouble focusing on what is positive for you? Spending some time focusing on what is going well can really help boost your mood and allow you to focus more on your work the rest of the day. Even if this sounds difficult for you, identify just one thing that has gone well for you in the past few days.

How will you get focused on the positive today? Share your thought here!

9 | Focusing on YOU

[Self Care is Important to Getting Focused When You Have ADHD](#)

Taking care of yourself sometimes falls to the bottom of the to do list when you have ADHD. To help you get focused, I recommend making self care a priority.

Today, I am happy to share a resource from my friend [Cheryl Heppard](#) who provides both business and health coaching. Cheryl created a great handout regarding ways to show love for yourself in honor of Valentines Day. When I read it, the handout includes some great ideas for self care. Download the handout, print it and post it somewhere prominent to help you remember to take care of yourself. You deserve it!

[I Love Myself Everyday and Everywhere \(from Cheryl Heppard\)](#)

[Self-Care and Stress Management](#)

Schedule 10 minutes for YOU today.

Whether you have ADHD or not, this is something that everyone should consider.

Meditation, deep breathing or doing anything just for you can really help you refocus – even if it is only for a few minutes. If you are stressed, it is harder to focus. How to you implement self-care and stress management?

Have a productive day!

[Take a Break to Get Focused](#)

When you need to Get Focused, schedule breaks to take a quick walk or do some jumping jacks. The break and exercise will help you focus more on the important things that you need to do.

[Exercise to Get Focused](#)

When you have trouble staying focused during your workday, activities at home or your studies that could be a sign that you need an exercise break. This does not mean you need to pack up and head to the gym! For your exercise break, I am suggesting that you take a brisk walk, run in place or do some jumping jacks. Just do something simple to give yourself a break and get your blood pumping.

[Relax to Get Focused](#)

Take some time today to just relax. Focus on you and your relaxation! Enjoy the day.

[Drink Water to Get Focused](#)

I have read that our brains are made up of 75 – 90% water. It makes sense, but it surprised me that it was this high. What do you think? Are you surprised?

Among all the other benefits of drinking water, it may also help us to be more focused. Dehydration can also lead to headaches which definitely cause us to lose focus. Give it a try today. Drink water and see if you feel more focused. Let us know how it goes!

[Breathe to Get Focused](#)

To help you focus today, set a timer each hour as a reminder to take 5 deep breathes.

Try It Now

Did it help you refocus and maybe get a little more energized. ADHD may cause you to feel like you are always rushing. Periodically slowing down and taking deep breathes just might be what you need to regain some calm and refocus on your priorities.

Did you try it?

Let us know how it worked for you!