**16+ Life Organization Tips for ADHD Adults**

Adults with attention deficit disorder tend to take on so many projects and commitments that they can't keep them all straight. Here, find tips for ADHD adults on how you can get organized and keep your life in order.
*by Judith Kolberg*

Deluttering and organizing your ADHD life is a key step in reaching bigger, better goals. So why do so many adults with attention deficit disorder fail to seek the help we need to [get organized with adult ADHD](http://www.additudemag.com/get-organized-with-adhd.html) and achieve a simpler, more streamlined life?

Judith Kolberg suggests it's a matter of perfectionism: We're unable to do what it takes to get even a bit more organized because we worry that we won't become perfectly organized. And as Kolberg, author of [*Conquering Chronic Disorganization*](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0966797000/additudemagaz-20), points out, there is no such thing as perfect organization. Life is capricious, and get-it-done strategies that work well today may prove useless tomorrow.

The good news, says Kolberg, is that seemingly small changes can bring big improvements in your life – [less clutter](http://www.additudemag.com/adhd/article/656.html), fewer hassles, and greater tranquility.

**Organize for the Big Picture**

**Set time limits for decision-making.** ADDers can spend days agonizing over decisions that others make in minutes. Speed the process by setting a time frame or a budget cap. If you're choosing a [summer camp](http://www.additudemag.com/adhd/article/837.html) for your child, for example, set a deadline, and make the best choice you can by that date. If you're deciding which new [cell phone](http://www.additudemag.com/adhd/article/539.html) to buy, pick a price cap and ignore more costly phones.

Always identify the most important factor to consider in making any decision, whether it's price, convenience, aesthetics, practicality, or something else. Focus solely on that factor when considering your decision.

**Fight the** [**tendency to over-commit**](http://www.additudemag.com/q%26a/ask_the_organizer/2013.html)**.** For each new commitment you make, give up an old one. If you agree to join the school fund-raising committee, for instance, give up the neighborhood watch committee. ADDers tend to spread themselves too thin.

**Keep your to-do lists brief.** Using big, bold letters, make a list of no more than five tasks on an index card. (List any additional items on the back of the card.) Once you have done those five things, refer to the back of the card to create a new [to-do list](http://www.additudemag.com/adhd/article/1491.html) - and discard the old one. You'll accomplish more, feel less frustrated, and manage your time better. (For a high-tech approach to to-do lists, see [To-Do Lists That Really Work](http://www.additudemag.com/adhd/article/932.html).)

**Fight hyperfocus.** Set an [alarm clock](http://www.additudemag.com/adhd/article/739.html), kitchen timer, or computer alert - or arrange for someone reliable to call you at a specified time or times. If you tend to lose yourself on eBay for hours at a time, you need this kind of help.

**Use a "body double."** This is a friend or family member who sits with you as you tackle mundane chores, like balancing a checkbook, filling out a job application, or reviewing [financial statements](http://www.additudemag.com/adhd/article/751.html). Your body double will create a productive atmosphere by sitting quietly and doing an unobtrusive task, like affixing stamps to envelopes or clipping recipes from a magazine.

**Organize Your Finances**

**Schedule a quarterly review of investments - with yourself.** Write the date and time to review these on your calendar or in your [planner](http://www.additudemag.com/adhd/article/3572.html), and go over your bank accounts, investment accounts, and retirement plans.

**Switch to online banking.** How much time do you spend each month writing checks, addressing envelopes, and affixing postage (not to mention mailing the checks)? It's faster to do your banking online - especially since you can set up recurring bills to be paid automatically - and you won't have to pay for postage. If you're intimidated by the sometimes-complicated computer work required to open an online account, ask a computer-savvy friend or family member to help.

**Use a single checking account.** Keep your checkbook in your purse or briefcase and return it there immediately after using it. Keep your check register and a few emergency checks (but not another checkbook!) in another location, in case you lose your checkbook.

**Keep plastic to a minimum.** The more credit cards you have, the more [statements and receipts](http://www.additudemag.com/q%26a/ask_the_organizer/1427.html) you'll have to contend with. Better to stick with one or two major cards and avoid the high-interest store and gas cards. Read the fine print and consider new card offers only if the terms of the card are clearly superior to the terms of your current cards.

**Get a debit card.** Keep it in your wallet, and use it instead of a personal check whenever possible. Each time you use the card, make an entry in your check register as if you had written a check. That way, your checking account stays balanced.

**Keep some extra cash on hand.** Put several hundred dollars in a waterproof plastic bag and place it someplace safe, but easy to locate (maybe your freezer). That way, you won't be caught empty-handed if a storm, power outage, or some other natural or man-made disaster makes it impossible to use ATMs.

**Carry a colorful wallet.** It's harder to [misplace](http://www.additudemag.com/adhd/article/939.html) a red wallet than an ordinary black or brown one. The same goes for your checkbook.

**Organize For Your Health & Happiness**

**Keep extra** [**ADHD medication**](http://www.additudemag.com/adhd-medication.html) **on hand.** Each time you fill a prescription, write in your planner the date on which you'll need to refill it (or set your computer to issue an alert or generate an e-mail reminder on that date). Ask your pharmacist if he can call to [remind you when it's time to refill](http://www.additudemag.com/q%26a/ask_the_organizer/1361.html). Your "renew date" should be at least one week before the date on which you'll run out of medication.

**Build socializing into your schedule.** That way, your desires to [meet new people](http://www.additudemag.com/adhd/article/5582.html), have interesting conversations, and keep up with friends are taken care of automatically. Take a class, join a book club or a lecture series, or start a dinner club.

**Join an ADD support group.** Support groups provide more than emotional support. For example, the members can get together online when it's time to tackle boring tasks, like [filling out tax returns](http://www.additudemag.com/adhd/article/828.html) or filing. One at a time, each person leaves the computer, dedicates 15 minutes to the task at hand, then returns to instant messaging - to joke, commiserate, and congratulate one another. Find out more about online and in-person support groups at [chadd.org](http://www.chadd.org/).

**Buy experiences, not objects.** There's nothing wrong with a little "retail therapy" to reward yourself for your accomplishments. But think twice before buying some new object (which may become just another bit of clutter in your home). Instead, use your money to buy a pleasant experience, such as a massage or a [night out with friends](http://www.additudemag.com/adhd/article/832.html).

[Say Bye-Bye to Paper Clutter](http://www.additudemag.com/adhd/article/1013.html)

[End Procrastination](http://www.additudemag.com/adhd/article/3994.html)

[Pay Bills on Time](http://www.additudemag.com/adhd/article/610.html)

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