

Tips for Organization

Consider using a notebook or calendar system for all reminders, appointments, tasks, etc.

- Be diligent in using a calendar or notebook to replace all paper reminders--particularly to replace scraps of paper with reminders, appointment slips, phone messages, etc., (they just get lost!)
- Maintain a to-do list in your notebook and reference it daily (if the list becomes messy, recopy it!)
- Be kind to yourself—no system is perfect, and implementation can take time—try the system for at least three months so you have time to get used to it.
- Computer/phone systems may be helpful, but if the computer frustrates you, stick with a regular paper notebook or calendar.

Tips for Prioritizing

When faced with multiple tasks, consider prioritizing each one by importance level.

- Consider rating each task (most of us like to complete easier tasks that are potentially less importance first—this can sometimes cause us to feel like we are not making progress towards our important goals)
- Ex: A, B, C task system, where:
 - A = tasks of highest importance and need to be completed in the near future (next 1-2 days)
 - B tasks = intermediate importance and can be completed in the near future with the knowledge that some aspects of the tasks may take longer.
 - C tasks = lowest importance but may tempt you to complete them first!
- Trouble shoot any difficulties you may have, to promote more efficient planning in the future.

Tips for Problem Solving and Managing Overwhelming Tasks/Activities

- Describe/articulate the problem in as few words as possible.
- List all the solutions you can think of – regardless of how possible/impossible they are.
- Consider (and list) the pros and cons of each solution to help you appraise each one.
- Rate each solution (you can use A, B, C system or consider rating numerically—0 to 10—according to the level of difficulty of each solution)
- Commit to the best option for you, and keep track of things in your notebook/calendar.

Tips for Managing the Paper Trail

- Develop a mail sorting system according to priorities/timeliness of your mail (bills, importance documents, coupons, etc.)

- Consider using a central location as a 'triage center'—may consist of a basket, file tray, bowl, box, etc.
- Create 'rules' for certain mail items (Ex: bills will be kept for X amount of time)
- Consider keeping all items needed for mail processing close by – such as your check book for paying bills and use your notebook/calendar to help you plan your mail tasks.
- Log/arrange 'triage center' times in your notebook/calendar, so you have time structured into your day/week to sit down and organize your mail.
- Involve your spouse/significant other/roommate if possible to reach an agreed upon system for everybody.
- Be kind to yourself—don't let negative thinking get the best of you!

Tips for Managing Distractibility/Negative Thinking

- Break down tasks into smaller components, particularly so they match the duration of attention span and take breaks between tasks.
- Consider using stimulus control(s) in your environment (Ex: remove the distractions, identify a consistent place for your important objects)
- Use distractibility reminders (Ex: Set alarms/other and prompts for you to ask yourself, 'Am I doing what I am supposed to be doing right now? Am I on task?')
- Often times, the things we struggle with color our reality to a significant degree--Work to identify negative thinking, and identify more helpful, balanced thoughts.
- Be wary of Procrastination – this can result in anxiety, feeling overwhelmed, and negative evaluation.

Engage in Overall Healthy Brain Habits

- Keep an eye on your sleep (consistent bed and wake times work best, with adults needing about 7-9 hours/night)
- Engage in healthy nutrition habits (regular/consistent meals and adequate hydration)
 - Eat around the same times of day, and adults should be consuming about 50% of their body weight in ounces of water (Ex: body weight of 140 lbs = consuming about 70 ounces of water/day)
- Watch your stress level and be mindful of the need for self-care.
- Exercise! Even walking 10 minutes a day can help, with the ideal being ~30 minutes of moderate activity a day (brisk walk, etc.)