

Time Blocking for ADHD: How to Stop Hoping You'll Find Time and Start Scheduling What Matters

Skills Practice Sheet LESSON: Time Blocking

SL-003

Many adults with ADHD know exactly what needs to be done but struggle to find a time to actually do it. Tasks sit on to-do lists for days or weeks. Important projects get pushed aside by whatever feels most urgent in the moment. Time Blocking is an evidence-informed strategy that helps reduce procrastination and improve follow-through by assigning important tasks to specific times on a calendar. Instead of hoping you'll remember or feel motivated later, you decide in advance when the work will happen.

The goal is not to finish an entire project today.

The goal is to show up to the scheduled block.

Use This Skill When...

- ☐ My to-do list keeps growing.
 - ☐ Important tasks never get done.
 - ☐ I feel busy all day but make little progress.
 - ☐ I keep forgetting priorities.
 - ☐ I only work on things when deadlines become urgent.
 - ☐ I know what I need to do but never seem to find the time.
 - ☐ I keep moving the same task from one day to the next.
 - ☐ I want more structure in my day.
- ☑ DO IT AFTER YOU HAVE PERFORMED TASK CHUNKING EXERCISE***

How to Do It...

Step 1. Choose ONE Important Task

What task needs dedicated time on my calendar?

Reminder: this is most powerful when used with Task Chunking, where you take a big task and break it into smaller tasks. Schedule the SMALLER tasks with this exercise.

Task:

Examples:

- Gather tax documents
- Respond to client emails
- Exercise
- Study for exam
- Create presentation outline
- Pay bills

Step 2. Make the Task Specific

Avoid scheduling large projects.
Schedule a specific action instead.

Project:

Specific Task or Chunk:

Examples:

Project: Prepare taxes → Chunk: Gather tax documents

Project: Create presentation → Chunk: Draft presentation outline

Project: Exercise regularly → Chunk: Walk for 20 minutes

Step 3. Estimate the Time

How long do I think this task will take?

Estimated Time: _____ minutes

Should I add extra time? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Adjusted Time Block: _____ minutes

Reminder: Many adults with ADHD underestimate how long tasks take. When in doubt, add extra time.

Step 4. Put It On The Calendar

Date / Start Time / End Time / Location:

Calendar Used:

☐ Phone Calendar

☐ Work Calendar

☐ Paper Planner

☐ Other _____

Reminder Set?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Step 5. Protect The Block

Before the block begins:

☐ Notifications silenced

☐ Materials ready

☐ Workspace prepared

☐ Needed documents available

☐ Reminder set

☐ Distractions minimized

Potential interruptions I anticipate:

If an interruption occurs, my plan is:

Step 6. Show Up

When the block started:

☐ I began immediately

☐ I used Five-Minute Activation

☐ I worked on the scheduled task

☐ I stayed with the task

☐ I completed the block

What happened when I started?

☐ I kept going

☐ I made progress

☐ I finished the task

☐ I worked for part of the block

☐ I stopped and rescheduled

Success?: Success means:

☐ I scheduled a block.

☐ I showed up.

☐ I started.

☐ I made progress.

Remember:

Success is attending the appointment—not finishing the entire project.

Practice Log

How difficult did the task feel before scheduling it? (Low) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (High)

How difficult did the task feel after scheduling it? (Low) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (High)

Did scheduling make the task feel more manageable?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Somewhat

What helped?

What got in the way?

What will I try next time?

Weekly Practice Log

	Blocked Scheduled	Showed Up	Made Progress
Monday		☐	☐
Tuesday		☐	☐
Wednesday		☐	☐
Thursday		☐	☐
Friday		☐	☐
Saturday		☐	☐
Sunday		☐	☐

Clinical Pearl

Many adults with ADHD believe they need more motivation to get things done. Often the problem is not motivation—it is the absence of a specific plan for when the work will happen. A to-do list tells you what to do. A calendar tells you when to do it. When a task is assigned to a specific time, you reduce the need to remember, decide, and repeatedly negotiate with yourself throughout the day.

Evidence-Informed Resource

This practice sheet was developed by Peace & Prosperity Psychiatry, APNC using evidence-informed principles from research on adult ADHD, executive functioning, organizational skills training, implementation intentions, cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), prospective memory, and external planning systems. Time Blocking is a clinical application of these research-supported principles. For a complete discussion of the evidence, see the companion lesson **SL-003 Time Blocking for ADHD: How to Stop Hoping You'll Find Time and Start Scheduling What Matters.**

References

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