Overcoming
Attention Deficit Disorder

DISCLAIMER: Note that the contents here are not presented from a medical practitioner, and that any and all health care planning should be made under the guidance of your own medical and health practitioners. The content within only presents an overview based upon research for educational purposes and does not replace medical advice from a practicing physician. Further, the information in this manual is provided "as is" and without warranties of any kind either express or implied. Under no circumstances, including, but not limited to, negligence, shall the seller/distributor of this information be liable for any special or consequential damages that result from the use of, or the inability to use, the information presented here. Thank you.
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**Introduction To ADD**

Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), the generic term for all types of the "official" clinical diagnosis called Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), affects nearly 4 percent to 6 percent of the U.S. population, according to the Attention Deficit Disorder Association.

An estimated 2 million children in the United States, or some 3 percent to 5 percent of children suffer from ADHD. In short, out of a classroom with about 28 children, the odds are that at least one will have ADHD. The disorder doesn’t stop there, though.

Adults also suffer from the disorder. In fact anywhere from 50 percent to 66 percent of children with ADHD continue on into their adult lives with ADHD issues to face on their jobs and in their relationships.

With ADHD being such a large important part of everyday life, this ebook strives to help clear up myths from facts and present an overview of the issues surrounding the disorder. It includes information about ADD /ADHD along with a variety of solutions available to help with treatment and coping, based upon the most recent studies, research, reports, articles, findings products and services available, so that you can learn more ADD/ ADHD health care.
For example, myth or truth? No one can accurately diagnose ADD / ADHD either in children or adults. This is not true. The fact is that although there is not yet a definitive medical test for diagnosing ADHD, there are distinct methods for gathering information and specific diagnostic criteria for assessing both children and adults listed in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV), published in 1995 by the American Psychiatric Association.

And ADD / ADHD treatment and coping options available today can actually be a blend of several factors that we’ll discuss here.

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**Understanding ADD in Laymen’s Terms**

ADD is a neurobiological disorder that is often seen in others as a hyperactive, impulsive state; i.e. not being able to sit still or pay attention for long periods of time, overactive like “bouncing off walls” and jumping in with inappropriate comments and behaviors sporadically. And this hyperactivity and impulsiveness occurs about
anywhere and everywhere, creating obstacles or often hindering day-to-day activities; work, school, social activities, family life, etc.

Just what IS ADD? Researchers believe that ADD is most probably caused by genetically based biological factors influencing neurotransmitter activity in areas of the brain. In some tests, people with ADD used lower levels of glucose in brain areas dealing with controlling attention and inhibiting impulses, meaning less activity. So a cause-and-effect approach ponders whether lower activity levels might contribute to some ADD symptoms.

What is known, though, is that ADD does appear across family lines. In short, indications suggest it’s hereditary, a possible genetic predisposition within members of the same family. For example, research shows that when a person is diagnosed with ADD, the odds are 25 percent to 35 percent that another family member also has ADD. Compared to the rest of the general public, there is a less than 6 percent chance of someone else having the disorder.

Not new really, since cases of hyperactivity, lack of attention and impulsivity have been reported since the early 1900’s, ADD has evolved out of health states with various terminologies; Hyperkinetic Reaction of Childhood, Minimal Brain Dysfunction, and Attention-Deficit Disorder With or Without Hyperactivity. However, with the official publication of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, 4th Edition (DSM-
IV) classification system, the disorder has been renamed to stress the importance of the inattention characteristics, as well as the hyperactivity and impulsivity traits, to Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

Old school has it that children outgrew ADHD during adolescent years, mainly because hyperactivity generally seemed to decrease throughout teenage years. But the fact that a lot of the symptoms carry on into adult years is now accepted and has erased that former belief. As a matter of fact, some research has reported that approximately 2 percent to 4 percent of adults suffer from some ADHD symptoms.

Among children and adults, many of those afflicted handle their ADHD and lead successful lives. However, many others have reported strained relationships, depression, work, social, school and dependency problems, and other negative issues. Overall, the keys to success have been early recognition of the disorder and prompt treatment. So we’ll focus on these two important issues.

**ADD in Adults**

Since the concept that ADD occurs in adults is a fairly new concept over the past decade or so, much more information is available about ADD in children at this time. However, in a nutshell, as
an adult, ADD has matured into a chronic neurobiological disorder, displaying three main traits: impulsivity, hyperactivity and inattention.

Although there is yet a positively identified determined set of factors, by they genetic, biological or physiological, that cause a person to become afflicted with ADD, fingers point to biological and heredity factors as playing major roles.

Cases in which heredity has been ruled out point to the following contributing factors: alcohol and tobacco exposure during fetal development, extremely high levels of lead in the body, birth weight recorded low, difficulties with birth and/or premature delivery, and postnatal injury to the prefrontal brain areas.

Note several popular “mythical” factors that many attribute to causing ADD when in reality they don’t: too much television, too much sugar and food additives, social environment (like divorce, poverty) or “bad” parenting.

Adult ADD seems to know no national boundaries, afflicting people worldwide where studies have been performed. And although ADD strikes both genders, adult male sufferers seem to outnumber females in a 2:1 ratio (or lower).

ADULT ADD SYMPTOMS

Now let’s take a look at the symptoms or traits characteristic of adults who have ADD. According to the Diagnostic and Statistical
Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV), adults with ADD most generally:

- Fail to give close attention to details
- Make negligent mistakes at work
- Fidget with hands or feet, twist about in seat
- Have difficulty with attention span during tasks and activities
- Are unable to remain seated in situations where seating is expected
- Don’t appear to listen when spoken to directly
- Feel unable to relax
- Have difficulty following instructions, often failing to finish work
- Express difficulty with quiet participation in leisure activities
- Suffer difficulties with organizational skills and activities
- Feel energized; i.e. “on the go” or “motor-driven”
- Don’t like engaging in lengthy mental effort; i.e. they prefer NOT to engage in anything that asks for sustained mental effort
- Talk a lot (an inordinate amount of time)
- Lose necessary items for tasks and activities
- Rush to supply answers before questions are completed
- Become distracted easily
- Tend to be impatient
- Are forgetful with regards to everyday activities
- Interrupt frequently or intrude upon others.
As a result of the above major characteristics in adults with ADD, the following issues are among the most popular that are prevalent in adult ADD lives. Note that both the characteristics above and the following problematic issues can range in scope from mild to extreme, depending upon the person’s own unique health combined with their ADD and other social, personal and economic situations. A professional health practitioner is recommended for best evaluating each case.

Adult ADD major problems areas include:

- Suffering repeated anxiety, depression and / or mood swings
- Experiencing relationship, behavioral and self-control problems
- Struggling with poor memory skills and work effort
- Managing troubles with emotional, arousal and motivational issues
- Undergoing low self-esteem, boredom and time mismanagement issues
- Ongoing employment or substance abuse issues
- Annoying chronic tardiness, risk-taking and (greater than average) multi-tasking behaviors

Actually any of the variety of social, personal and economic problematic areas in adult ADD lives is what causes the person to seek professional help when their disorder is undiagnosed. Often referred to as a “hidden disorder,” ADD in adults can underlie many outstanding mood disorders, substance abuse and other complicated
cases. Often it’s not until after a person has been diagnosed with something else like anxiety or depression, or until after his or her own child is diagnosed with ADD, that healthcare providers are alerted to the adult’s ADD. Thus many today still go undiagnosed, untreated, which is a shame, because without the diagnosis, many believe ADD sufferers to be lazy, unintelligent and immature.

And there is help with treatment. Many afflicted with ADD can even apply for help under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (prohibits employment and public accommodations discrimination against people with a record of and / or who have current physical or mental impairments that substantially limit one or more major life activities, including learning and working.)

For a diagnosis, people can begin with their healthcare provider or consult an educational psychologist, a behavioral neurologist, a psychiatrist or a clinical psychologist. They would undergo an evaluation that would generally include a complete developmental, medical, psychiatric, educational and work history, interview about any medications used and noted ADD symptoms / characteristics and overall look at personal health, well-being and life in general (relating to social and environmental factors).

Normally more than one person is involved in this diagnostic processing that spans a couple hours time. And main areas of focus
are whether or not, and if so, to what extent, the person has the three main ADD traits (hyperactivity, lack of attention and impulsivity). Adult ADD evaluations also include DSM-IV AD/HD symptom rating scales to go over previous records; for instance, past medical evaluations and test results, past work and school records in order to present a more accurate assessment and diagnosis. Then a program of treatment and coping skills can be put in place and any possible other health issues may be uncovered for further treatment or ruled out.

**ADD in Children**

Children exhibit one of three main types of ADD. And although ADD in children seems to exist worldwide, at least in the countries tested thus far, boys have been found to be afflicted with ADD more than girls, 3:1. The three main types with the symptoms of each are:

**ADHD predominately inattentive type: (AD/HD-I)**

The sufferer:

- Lacks attention to details, makes careless mistakes.
- Has difficulty with lengthy attention span.
- Does not seem to listen.
- Struggles with instructions.
- Struggles with organization.
- Prefers not to use sustained mental effort.
- Misplaces items.
- Can be easily distracted.
- Can be forgetful during everyday activities.

**ADHD predominately hyperactive-impulsive type: (AD/HD-HI)**

The sufferer:
- Exhibits nervousness movements with hands or feet, twists in chair.
- Does not stay seated for long.
- Is in higher gear, running or climbs a lot.
- Has a tough time handling quiet activities.
- Talks a lot.
- Rushes to reply to questions before they’re finished being asked.
- Is impatient.
- Interrupts others.

**ADHD combined type: (AD/HD-C)**

The sufferer:
- Meets criteria from both sets above.

Regardless of which type of ADD a child has, parents are NOT to blame. The cause of the disorder is mostly attributed to heredity factors. Good parenting skills or bad ones have nothing to do with the issue. So outside factors like spoiling a child, abusive or bad parenting, divorce, poor or poverty living environment, etc. are not to blame.
And even though a child has ADD, that does not mean he or she needs to be “labeled” and stuck into a category. Many, many children with ADD today can and do learn to overcome their limitations and far exceed expectations, competing well with those who do not have the disorder.

Studies show that the earlier a child is diagnosed and the earlier treatment begins, the better chance there is for success. In other words, early intervention is KEY.

There are many ways to help children who have ADD. First of all, let the child know that you care (and love him or her, if appropriate, as in the case of relatives). Sometimes after a diagnosis, youngsters may think your opinions of them have changed and that you think less of them. So let them know that this is not the case at all, even share an imperfection of your own with them to let them know you work on issues, too, and did as a child.

Also, let children know that you support them in their challenge and struggles with ADD. And try your best to express your support with positive remarks, praise, encouragement and any help you can.

Note there will be good days and bad days in dealing with the ADD, just as there are with anything else. And no one is perfect. So remember the better days when bad ones roll around and keep on hanging in there! It may help a lot to keep a journal. Jot down notes,
(and don’t worry about spelling and grammar- just have fun with it), include school grades, pictures, etc. Make it multi-media, if possible, and colorful. Then during bad times, you’ll have plenty of reminders in your journal of the progress to date and be proud and encouraged for the both of you.

Another way to help a child with ADD is to get help yourself. Learn all you can about ADD and keep up with advances in the industry. Reach out to ADD organizations and get on their mailing lists. Clip magazine articles about ADD and follow up with any resources they share. Ask your own healthcare provider for ADD information, check out library books on the subject, bookmark ADD websites and sign up for their free newsletters, etc. Start a folder for ADD information and put your contacts and resources there.

Then share these resources and tips with other people in the child’s network; his or her teachers, parents / guardians and other concerned relatives, pastor, etc. That way you can all share your support and concerns and help one another help the child.

Of course, recommend diagnostic testing as soon as possible to make sure of the ADD diagnosis, if this is in your area of responsibility. If not, maybe you can offer support and the ADD information in your resources to the one(s) responsible for making that decision.
Next level up, see how YOU can participate in hands-on help with the ADD child. Maybe you can offer tutoring, reading assistance, help with organizational or other behavioral skills? Maybe you can help teach study skills like using 3X5 cards and colored markers. Maybe conduct practice verbal and written quizzes a little every other day. Maybe offer the caretakers (if they are not you) a day off. Maybe simply offer to gather more information. Volunteer to join the “team” and see what you can do to help.

Note when you do this, depending upon your role in the child’s life and your level of support, you may need to complete some specialized training first. A workshop or series of training sessions from qualified ADD professionals may be in order so that you can learn how to best help the child. You’ll need to learn how to teach problem solving, how to reward positive behaviors and reply to negative behaviors, how to develop a game plan and strategy, monitor and log results, identify and focus on strengths, handle weakness and much more. So have patience and be open to learning on your end. And don’t be afraid to follow up, ask questions, etc. – in short, be a team player!.

Don’t forget to set aside time to take care of your own self and life in the meantime. There are online forums, chat rooms, message board, and listservs (no cost email list subscriptions where you can
email others) for communicating and reaching out to others in similar conditions. In this way, you can get some support and encourage for yourself. And you can share with others to help them, too.

You can also find out when local and online ADD and other helpful organizations are having upcoming meetings, presentations, lectures and workshops, and sign up. Many teach and share tips and advice for adults who are helping children with ADD.

Helping someone with a high energy level, like a child with ADD, can sure take a high amount of energy. And no one can “always” be at the best, highest energy level 24/7. So reach out and take care of yourself, too. “Slow and steady wins the race,” as old Aesop’s story goes.

**Support Groups, Organizations & Treatment Programs**

For all ages, there is no cure for ADD. However, a variety of treatment options can help children and adults lead better lives managing their symptoms. Education combined with medication and counseling yields the greatest results to date. However, there is no one-size-fits-all approach, as people have their own unique lifestyles, their own symptoms to deal with, their own copying skill sets and their own treatment options that work best for them in their environments.

To begin, here are some of the popular components used in ADD
treatment strategies. They are listed in no particular order of importance:

- Information and education about ADD
- Testing and consultations with healthcare professionals
- Support network, groups, counseling, coaching
- Medication
- Behavioral, Educational and career coping skills development
- Dedication, persistence and elbow grease
- Available educational or workplace assistance

In all, a combination long-term program of many of the above is highly recommended for optimal treatment strategy. Here is a look in detail at each of the treatments above.

**INFORMATION AND EDUCATION ABOUT ADD**

First and foremost, gather all the information you can about ADD and file it in one place; one drawer or cabinet. Ask your local librarian for books, videos, cassettes, magazine articles, local meetings and anything else that can help you learn more about ADD. Conduct online searches for helpful websites with ADD ebooks, ezines, organizations, forums, message boards, workshops and more. Bookmark them, sign up for their ezine or online newsletters and check back for updates, news, informative articles, and other treatment tips. Network with your friends, healthcare providers, and others to share information and
learn from each other, too.

**TESTING AND CONSULTATIONS WITH HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS**

Often upon learning and finding out more about the ADD diagnosis, many are better able to tackle treatment plans. It’s getting over that “scary” not-knowing part first. So check with your own local healthcare network and educational advisers for help finding professionals to test for ADD. For other places to turn, check out the Yellow Pages under listings for: neurologists, psychiatrists, psychologists. You can also check with local clinics, recommendations from family and ADD friends’ physicians, children’s pediatricians, your local branch of the Children and Adults with Attention Deficit Disorder (C.H.A.D.D.) group, physician and psychologist referral services, local colleges or universities with medical departments and your favorite online search engine – key in "ADHD (large city in your area)" and "ADHD (your state)" for starters. For additional help, the National ADHD Directory lists over 600 professionals and is available online via this group:

Attention Deficit Disorder Resources  
223 Tacoma Ave S #100  
Tacoma WA 98402  
Monday–Friday  
11:30 a.m–2:30 p.m.  
Phone 253.759.5085  
E-Mail office@addresources.org

At this time, basic listings are free for all. Expanded listings carry
annual fee rates.

Here are some basic questions to ask when you are trying to learn more about ADD. Keep a journal and take notes about each place you call for information so that you’ll have good records to refer back to when making choices.

QUESTIONS:

1. Can you test for ADHD? If “yes”, what portion is covered with my health insurance and/or do you have sliding scale fees (these are generally based upon income)? If “no”, ask for recommendations/referrals that may be covered or call your insurance company for referrals.

2. Is ADD is large part of your practice? And how experienced is the person I would be working with in successful ADD treatment? (Key is to look for someone with successful experience).

2. Briefly describe your testing procedures.

3. Briefly share some of your recent history of your current treatments that are working successfully with ADHD - in adults (or “in children” depending upon your need).

4. What type of treatments do you have available? (Key is to make sure there are options to personalize what works for your lifestyle, and not a one-size-fits-all approach.) And can you mail out some information about them?
A. Check timing and costs (especially medications) to make sure their options fit into your schedule and budget

B. If medications are involved, make sure someone has authority to prescribe, as psychologists don’t and may send you to a psychiatrist whom they work under or elsewhere – meaning more expense, another consultation, etc. - so check your insurance again for coverage, timing and costs for scheduling and budgeting.

SUPPORT NETWORK, GROUPS, COUNSELING, COACHING

A lot of adults with ADD have benefited from working under the direction of an ADD coach. A good coach can help them learn behavioral and coping management skills and put them into practice to improve their daily functions, like improving organizational skills and productivity.

Some key areas of concentration for improvement could be learning to use organizer and filing systems. Step-by-step instructions on how to choose systems, set them up and use them effectively, monitoring for revisions / updates to tailor an individual workable solution long-term is recommended. They can then be adjusted and even taught or coached by professionals in the industry, like from companies who sell organizer products such as Franklin Covey and
Day-Timer, or even by a friend, colleague, neighbor or relative who uses a successful system already and has time to help coach. (You can contact companies like Franklin Covey and Day-Timer for workshops online, in your area or available as tutorial videos, books, etc.) Basic program goals would generally focus on: **planners** (either print or computer-generated format) and **to-do lists** for scheduling and tracking regular activities, daily classes, meetings, projects, appointments, etc.; **alarm systems** to help direct activities and other planned items; easy and quick **filing and management systems** for both hard copy and computer-generated documents and “things” with an assortment of tools to fit your lifestyle; and overall **organizational management strategy**.

**MEDICATION**

Medications are often prescribed by physicians to help stabilize brain activity or make it more “normal” functioning. They are the same for adults and children. Common stimulant medications that have shown the most effective ADD results are **Adderall, Ritalin** and **Dexedrine**. **Cylert** and **Desoxyn** are two other popular prescriptions.

**Ritalin**, the most popular medicine prescribed for ADHD, has been prescribed for over 40 years and is reported by some healthcare professionals as being “safer than aspirin.” Research with ADHD children shows that **Ritalin**, when taken in the correct dosage, helps
most, or some 70 percent, largely decrease their ADHD behaviors.

The exact role that all of these stimulants play is still being uncovered; however, research definitely shows that they help most ADHD recipients lead better lives with major improvements.

There is a downside, though. The medical community and the FDA say that these stimulants are safe in their respective prescribed doses. However, the downside is that: there is extra paper work for the healthcare professionals; short-term (one-month supply) prescription regulations; and FDA and licensing issues with regards to people seeking these just to get controlled substances for other (unethical) reasons.

Notable is that in general, people with ADHD report feeling “calm” when taking these medications instead of feeling "high" (like an addict trying to gain a prescription would desire). And adults with ADD who have history of substance abuse often report an end in their desire for abusive substances when they are medicated for ADHD.

Research shows that some antidepressants may be helpful for the management of several ADD symptoms (also for persons suffering co-existing mood disorder and anxiety symptoms) if the stimulant medications are not effective. Popular antidepressants are Desipramine, Effexor, Imipramine, Nortriptyline and Wellbutrin. If none of these are effective, others may be tried or combinations of the
above treatments at different dosages, depending upon the individual case. Negative side effects to watch out for include: getting the “jitters,” headaches or stomachaches (Pepto-Bismal or Zantac is often recommended for stomachaches).

BEHAVIORAL COPING SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

A combination of behavior and cognitive therapy has been found to help modify some ADD behaviors. It also helps ADD sufferers handle the emotional effects of their disorder. Basically, there are four key issues involved in behavior modification programs:

1. Start with goals that the person can achieve in small steps.
2. Be as consistent as possible— with times of the day, days of the week, environment, and associated people.
3. Implement behavioral modifications all along the way, long-term. I.e. don’t wait until the end to introduce everything.
4. Take learning the new skills’ process a little each day, one day at a time.

Check with your ADD resources for help learning and incorporating new behavioral skills. There are a variety of treatment programs for adults and children, from workshops and classroom instruction to videos and audiocassettes and more. See which options fit into your lifestyle and budget and don’t be afraid to experiment with something new.
EDUCATIONAL / CAREER COUNSELING & COPING SKILLS

Studies show that therapy and/or counseling to help those afflicted with ADD learn coping skills and adaptive behaviors enhances their quality of life. Here are some main issues that often need to be faced in the job/career and school arena for the person with ADD, and how to handle them.

**Distractions** – Distractions from both dealing with boredom and over-stimulation can both be important challenging issues in the workplace. Boredom can lead to distracted thoughts, daydreaming – which leads to loss of time and work production. And over-stimulation can lead to hyper-alert mode, resulting in overactive imaginations and distracting thoughts, resulting in lack of focus and attention to the job.

Some boredom busters include: break up tasks into smaller more manageable chunks, take breaks and water-cooler trips, and ask for more challenging work.

Some over-stimulation busters include: forget “multi-tasking,” do one thing at a time; when possible, use tools like email and voicemail so that emails and calls do not interrupt your routine, allowing you to focus more on tasks at hand. Then only respond to them twice a shift. Jot down notes to help sort out ideas that pop into your mind. See your manager, teacher or advisor about handling chaotic noise, space and other hectic work-related and school-related
issues – maybe offer to use earphones, move to a less crowded area or transfer to a different class.

**Impulsive and hyperactive Behaviors** – Dealing with impulsive and hyperactive behaviors are managed better if the job or lengthy class is not an inactive, sedentary position. However, if the job is something like sitting at a computer all day, or your weekend course lasts half a day, set your watch timer and try to get up and about for at least 5-minutes every hour. Stretch your legs, go get a drink, etc. And enjoy active breaks and lunch periods. Pack your lunch so that you can walk to a nearby park to eat instead of standing in a lunch line somewhere. And run to the post office, mailbox or student bookstore during a break.

To handle impulsive behaviors, jot down notes in a daily planner or journal about what happens, triggering the behaviors. Then when you are calmer and things are less chaotic, take a look at your notes and get with your ADD healthcare team (friends, support network, doctor, etc.) to come up with alternative behavioral solutions for facing the issue next time around. Make sure to touch base and see if you are following your recommended ADD treatment plan, too. Are you taking the recommended dosage of medication? Are you getting enough rest? You need to take care of yourself, don’t forget!

**Time, Memory and Organizational Management** – No need to go it
alone! Get help with managing time, thoughts and things. Carry around a small notebook with a calendar insert and pencil, and USE them. Jot down to-do’s, log deadlines, tests and meetings, jot down notes for tomorrow, etc. For more help, try a planning system from the local office supply store or check online for planning pages to download and make your own planner system. Ask your local or school librarian for help finding organization and planning books, videos, cassettes and other resources. And there’s no need to reinvent the wheel, either! Use what works for others. Ask for recommendations from family, friends, teachers, neighbors and co-workers. For better timing, set your watch or timed email alert to notify you to upcoming changes or scheduled events.

**Managing large and / or long-term projects** – Get help! Ask you manager or teacher to help you break down the project into smaller steps of chunks. Maybe you work with a temporary helper, too, or team up with a fellow classmate? And see about finding better ways to handle the tasks- maybe use subfolders to help organize materials more clearly, print out hard copies of online documents for marking up purposes and seek advice from more experienced workers or students, for starters.

**Problems with Co-workers, Clients or Students** – Have difficulties dealing with tough clients? Dealing with tough co-workers or
immature students? Working with and being around people day in and day out can be challenging in itself. Check out books on how to handle difficult people and how to handle workplace issues. Find and attend relationship-building workshops. Try different settings. For example, maybe work in a department with less contact would be better, maybe even a home office setting. Check with supervisors and your advisor to see what options are available. And check with others in the industry, like through organizations that your company or major is associated with, and see what other workers do. Maybe you can job-share or present your own alternative solution written out and well planned in advance.

DEDICATION, PERSISTENCE AND ELBOW GREASE

Hang in there! Just like anything else in life, there are ups and downs when dealing with ADD. What will drive you to successful living is dedication, persistence and a little elbow grease, during those down or tough times. Here are a few ADD tips.

First and foremost, is to focus daily on your overall health, both in mind and body. Eat right, exercise a minimum of 30 minutes a day, get enough rest, avoid unhealthy places, substances, people...in short take good care of yourself. Be your best friend and your body (and mind) will thank you during those difficult days.

Next, always continue your education, either formally or
informally. No need to enroll in a university. Continue to read nonfiction about your work, health and personal interests, participate in organizational events in your industry, attend a class or workshop series once a year. Keep up! Use your brain and put it to work for you and believe it or not, some ideas just might surface on tough days to get you through the challenging times; you might remember others who survived and overcame their own challenges and put some of their tips to work, for instance.

Don’t fail to plan. Plan to succeed. Learn about goal setting and achieving by studying from books like, “The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People” by Stephen R. Covey. And put his steps to work in your own life.

Surround yourself with a positive environment as much as possible. For example, don’t worry so much if some people don’t seem to want to accept or deal with your ADD. Those people are probably self-absorbed in their own issues for one reason or other, and don’t accept other people’s disorders or issues, either. Actually, you never know - -they could be working on accepting and dealing with some very serious issues themselves, and are afraid to share discuss them with anyone. Either way, tough. It’s their loss, not yours. Hope for the best for them, but move on and focus on being around positive people who pretty much follow that “Do unto others...” theme. You can’t avoid
ALL negativity, but you can choose to focus on more positive aspects of life. Reach out with your five senses for ideas to make your day better: shed the black business wardrobe and liven up your color scheme; turn on some lively, happy music and sing along; get out and learn to dance again; try some different foods from different countries to spice up your life; and plug in a seasonal air freshener for a change of scent. Be creative and jot down ideas for experimenting with new, positive environmental ideas each month. Dig in and enjoy life. And remember: when the going gets tough, ...the tough don’t run!

**AVAILABLE EDUCATIONAL OR WORKPLACE ASSISTANCE**

ADHD is recognized as a disability. Reasonable and appropriate accommodations can at times be made in the classroom for children with ADHD, and in the workplace for adults with ADHD, because of federal legislation; the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans With Disabilities Act, and the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act. These accommodations can greatly impact the quality of life, directly resulting in improved work efficiency and productivity. Learn as much as you can about opportunities that may be available to you and take action. Don’t be afraid to follow up, either, and get information you can understand – i.e. that’s not in government-speak.
Coping Tips

Here are some tips to enjoy. Print them out and share with your family, neighbors, friends, church members, relatives and others who have ADD or would benefit by learning more about the disorder.

Daily Living ADD TIPS

1. Often the most obvious is overlooked. If you or someone you know suspects ADD / ADHD, seek help. Ignorance is NOT always bliss!

2. Seek treatment solutions that work best for YOU. And support those others choose for themselves.

3. Continue your education about ADD / ADHD. Research continues daily. Keep up with the latest research, books, treatments; check out new workshops in your area, delve into new online resources, etc. Information can mean healing power.

4. Think: long-term and don’t be afraid of change. Since there is no cure for ADD, always be open and willing to try to modifying behaviors and managing other symptoms with revised aids. For example, get on a mailing list for Franklin Covey planning products. If your budget, circumstances and time allow, experiment with computerized organizational and planning tools, sync them with print versions. Remember Aesop’s, “Slow and steady wins the race.”
   Attend meetings and other events in your area. Meet people, 
   compare coping strategies, learn about new products and 
   services out there to help, make new friends, have fun. Don’t let 
   ADD keep you down and out. Get involved and be supportive of 
   others, too.

6. Identify any money-handling areas and get help. Ask your 
   banker to help teach you how to balance your checkbook, reduce 
   your credit card debt, create a monthly budget and save a little. 
   Times change, expenses change, how to handle money changes. 
   So what you may have learned in your early years, may be 
   different today. Savings accounts sure earn a lot less interest, 
   for example. So there may be alternative methods offering 
   better benefits for you. Multiple credit cards can mess you up, so 
   only use one. And online bill paying may help you set up 
   automated, regular payments so that your bills get paid on time 
   every month from now on. So do a little research online and at 
   your local banks to see what you can find; what helpful tips, 
   products and services are available.

7. Keep a To-Do or Wish List going just for FUN things! If you just 
   focus on work priorities, you may eventually get caught up in 
   life’s daily grind and get depressed (feeling like you’re getting
nowhere). So start a list and jot down things you’d like to do, rewards you’d like to strive for, people you’d like to have fun with, places you’d like to go, etc. And make them happen! Work one into your schedule every week, for example. By planning, you WILL work these goodies in and find more enjoyment in life. Another rewarding aspect of this is that during difficult days, you’ll have good things to look forward to and can maybe even jumpstart a good mood by selecting one that fits into your plans and budget that day, like a bike ride to the park with a friend.

8. Develop your sense of humor. Learn to laugh at your own self, your own mistakes, and lighten up. Add some humor into your day, a half-hour sitcom, a humorous radio show during your commute, the Sunday and daily comics. Remember that old saying, “Laughter is the best medicine?” Time to laugh! Prescribe some for yourself.

COPING WITH HOLIDAY & SEASONAL STRESS

Here are some tips on how to better handle holiday and seasonal stress. They are listed in no particular order of importance.

1. Instead of focusing on what other people are doing and trying to fit in with their lifestyles, traditions, celebration planning, focus on what works best for your family and you. For example, some people go into detailed planning, making elaborate menus of
home cooked foods that could take days to shop for and
prepare. Others need to wait until the absolute last minute to
seek out and put to use their special decorations, treats, gifts,
etc. Do what makes YOU comfortable. Do it in spurts, if you like.
Plan ahead and go out when there is less traffic, less people at
restaurants, in line, at stores.

2. During late fall and (all) winter seasons with less sunlight, plan
ahead. Purchase bulbs from the thrift store with higher wattage
(like 75- or 100-watts) and replace them in lamps that can take
higher voltage. Keep extras on hand, too. This is the time of
year when bulbs decide to go out, too, because of more use than
normal.

3. Seek out help. No need to be Superman or Wonderwoman. Ask
family members or roommates to chip in and help around the
house a little more than normal. Check around for local helpers
by posting notices on supermarket and other store bulletin
boards, call and mail letters to high school and college guidance
counseling departments to see about hiring students. Ask
friends, neighbors, church members, etc. for referrals. Reach
out!

4. Build flex time into your schedule. In other words, try not to be
rigid with ordinary, day-to-day tasks and ones that pop up
unexpectedly. When possible, to allow for extra time during holiday rushes, seasonal weather messes, etc. Leave a little earlier, allow time to shop, work, play more. Have “free” spaces for doing absolutely nothing if you want!

5. Keep an emergency “healthcare” list ready. Just in case you need a little extra help handling ADD symptoms that could flare-up too high, have a list of “help” numbers handy on the refrigerator with a magnet. List your healthcare provider, any local health centers that might host workshops for stress management, an ADD coach, helpful ADD (and other) websites, forums and chat rooms, etc.

6. Communicate. Let your fellow housemates know about certain stressors or other triggers that come up and ask to work out solutions. For example, say your dishwasher breaks down when guests are over for the weekend and costly repairs aren’t in the budget. Setup a schedule so that everyone pitches in daily to keep dishes caught up, so you’re not left without plates and cups one day, and your sinks are free to use.

7. Try to stick to your normal routine, even if you’re at someone else’s home visiting. Sure, you can allow for flexibility, but remember to take any meds you may have, stick to healthy foods and don’t overdo caffeine products, get plenty of rest,
have some alone time if you need it, don’t overdo it, etc.

8. Be creative. Tap into your energy and don’t be afraid to have fun with your family, co-workers, friends and neighbors. Join in a dessert fest and bring a couple dozen cookies, make your own gifts.

9. Save wear and tear on the car, money, patience and time driving around. Purchase gifts, food, whatever you can over the phone and online. Many places offer free shipping and online discounts, coupons and other savings programs. Plan ahead and check around.

10. Just say, “No,” when you need to, say, “No.” Don’t let people, especially relatives, push your buttons. It’s OK if they may not know or understand what ADD is all about. YOU know. And you know your limits, at least pretty much of the time. Most people understand the meaning of “stress” so you can tell them you need to be cautious of this and take care of yourself. And do it! You are your own best friend ☺

How to Setup and Use Organizer & Filing Systems

Organizing and planning are normal parts of everyday life. Why be organized?

- So you can spend less time looking for things, more time

   ENJOYING things and being more productive.
• So you can stop feeling anxious and overwhelmed when you can’t find something and feel overjoyed instead at knowing exactly where your possessions are!
• So you can get more accomplished and earn more money 😊
• So you can lighten stress levels resulting from wasted “searching” for things, from being late, unprepared, harried – angry. And instead reap benefits from improved relationships at home, at work, at social function.

But what happens in the world of ADD is this. There are normal cognitive (or brain) functions that control learning and behavioral activities; the top three of these functions are working memory (or the maintaining of information that was just seen or heard), sense of time and organization. People who have ADD often have trouble dealing with these three functions. The results? Lack of good, solid planning and time management skills, often hurting their job, home and social responsibilities.

There are a few basic steps for setting up and using organizer and filing systems to help people with ADD. These are only general guidelines and can be adjusted to suit individual needs. Seek help from a trusted friend, educator or other person who uses successful planning strategy, or check with professional organizational companies.
**Planners** – Planning systems can help people calm down and focus more on real-time, day-to-day activities. They need to be used for short-term and long-term planning. Look over options available in your price ranges at planning departments and stores like Day-Timers and Franklin Covey, and online. There are print planners and planner software for computers and handheld computers. And check with the local librarian and search online for books, forms and other resources that may be available for creating our own planner pages on your computer or word processor. Pencil and paper work fine, too.

Many planners have instructions to help guide you through setting up a system. (If you are using pencil and paper, find a library book or guide to help you). Choose the calendar pages you’d like: some planners offer variations, like choosing between daily, weekly or monthly planning sheets. To begin, daily sheets are a good choice so that you have plenty of room to jot down information. Monthly sheets only offer small-boxed areas the size of a calendar for writing down information, whereas daily pages offer one full page per day, usually sectioned off in hourly segments to log your meetings, classes, work and other functions. Fill out any contact information page in case you misplace your planner, then fill in any resource contacts you’d like in the back (like phone numbers for relatives, clients, doctors, etc.).

**To-Do Lists** – Work with your ADD or helping coach to create To-Do
lists. Keep it simple and start with the top three priorities each day. Add to the list as needed. Then for up to 15 minutes a day, spend time transferring these tasks to your calendar pages and prioritizing them, so you have a strategy for handling each day. Use colored markers and stickers to help and make planning fun. For example, highlight top the three top priority To-Do’s each day in RED. Less important items that don’t necessarily need completed that day could be highlighted in YELLOW.

**Alarm Systems** – To coordinate your schedule, be pro-active. Use an alarm clock and plan on enough time to get up to get ready for work or school. For meetings, appointments and other timed functions throughout the day, get or learn how to set your watch alarm or cell phone alarm (on vibrate mode, if sound will disrupt a class or something). Don’t leave timing to chance and guessing. Take charge!

**Filing and Management Systems** – While organizing, you’ll run across all sorts of items you’ll want to keep for later reference and use, like brochures, letters, instructions, account information, etc., in print or hard copy format and online via email and other computer- and online-generated format. So learn to create and maintain real world and computerized filing systems. Get coaching here, too, from someone you know and trust who successfully maintains his or her own systems regularly. And refer to your books and other resources
about your computer model and on home filing systems. For starters, you can set up a box with manila folders for hard copy materials. And create simple folders under “My Files” on your computer to save electronic data.

**Organizational Management Strategy** – Keep everything in ONE planner. And take your planner around with you throughout the day. There is software out there that syncs handheld and print planners. So find out what your needs and budget are and make sure to keep only ONE planner system going. Make it a habit to log everything in there and use it DAILY. Spend at least 15 minutes a day in quiet, reviewing and planning for the next day. Then at the beginning of the next day, take at least 5 quick minutes to glance at your whole day of plans to make sure of your plan of action for that 24-hour period.

Check off items as they are completed each day. And reward yourself! It doesn’t have to be a monetary reward, either. Enjoy some extra time listening to your favorite music, cooking your favorite meal or spending time with your best friend as a reward.

What works and what doesn’t? Take notes. Did you miss a meeting? Why - -was your cell phone alarm not set properly? Or did you forget to log it maybe? Mistakes can and will happen. No one is perfect. So accept errors, forgive yourself and move on. Prepare better next time.
Carry blank pages in your planner for taking notes. Jot down ideas for improvement – maybe you’re trying to do too much in one day? Maybe you’re misjudging the time it takes to get back and forth to work? Maybe you have your priorities mixed up? Something happens to everyone at one time or another. Stop and take a second to have a look see. Remember, “Slow and steady wins the race!”

**Related Disorders**

Other disorders often accompany ADD once the diagnosis is confirmed. Some of the more common ones, in no particular order, are:

- **Anxiety Disorder and Depression** - People with ADD may be some of the 18 million-plus people who suffer from Anxiety Disorder and Depression. Good news! Approximately 90 percent of those who seek help for anxiety and depression improve. And those who have effective ADD help get a handle not only on their ADD symptoms, but also with their anxiety and depression as a result.

- **Tourette’s Syndrome Disorder** – Also known as Tourette Syndrome, Tourettes and Tourette Spectrum Disorder, this is a neurological disorder with symptoms that can include nervous or habitual mannerisms or muscle contortions, like rapid or exaggerated eye blinking and/ or twitching of parts of the face. Other symptoms may include clearing the throat a lot, sniffing or vocal disruptions or
shouting out words (generally swearing). More adults and not many children have the disorder. However, many people who have Tourette’s Syndrome have ADD. The good news is that medication can help with behaviors for both.

**Bipolar Disorder** – This is noted as a psychiatric illness with some characteristics or symptoms that cross over into the area of ADD. Major Bipolar symptoms include mood swings with extreme highs and lows, and swings in behavior and thinking patterns. Some symptoms that crossover into the ADD area are high energy levels and decreased sleep.

**Learning Disabilities** – Also referred to as LD, this disorder affects up to 30 percent of children who have ADD. Some of the symptoms can include a different interpretation of what is seen or heard or the way things (concepts / ideas) are linked together or connected in the brain. In other words, learning to read and do math can be challenging if a person with LD has to learn with the same tools as the average person without LD. There can be speech, learning, skills or other sub-categories or focuses within the disorder. One main type is a reading disorder, dyslexia. Note: up to 8 percent of elementary school children have reading disabilities.
Other ADD Resources
(ADD sites, chat rooms, forums, tools, etc.)

Attention Deficit Disorder Association (ADDA)
ADDA
P.O. Box 543
Pottstown, PA 19464
Phone: 484-945-2101
Fax: 610-970-7520
www.add.org - Conferences, teleclasses, articles, products (like audio & video tapes) and more.

C.H.A.D.D. (Children and Adults with Attention Deficit Disorder)
499 NW 70th Avenue, #308
Plantation, FL 33317
(305) 587-3700
www.chadd.org
Learn about research studies, conferences, surf their professional directory.

Attention Deficit Disorder Resources
223 Tacoma Ave S #100
Tacoma WA 98402
Monday–Friday
11:30 a.m–2:30 p.m.
Phone 253.759.5085
E-Mail office@addresources.org
www.addresources.org
Resources for about anything to do with ADD; for children, adults, parents, workplace, skills, diagnosis and treatment and much more. The ink to the National ADHD Directory is here, too:
http://www.addresources.org/directory.php

Daily Planner Sheets
www.digital-women.com/daily-planner
Free printable planner sheets: for men and women
(don’t let the domain name fool you!)