

**ADHD in  
everyday  
life**

# The Best Strategies for Better Self-Management

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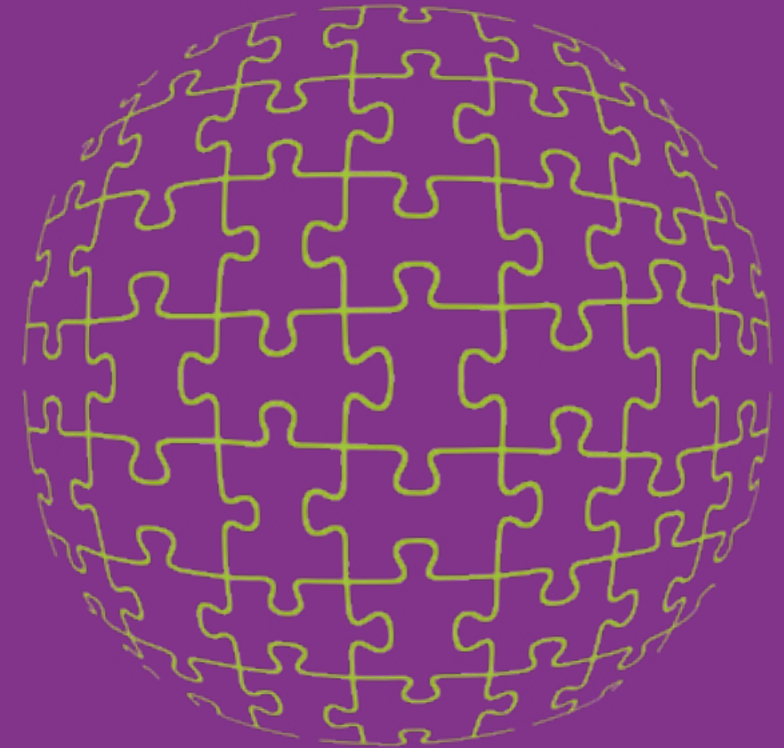
# 1

## Salami Tactic

Coping better with Complex Tasks.

This method will help you:

- Bring things to an end
- Reduce excessive demands
- To conquer procrastination or "procrastinitis"



First, define your objective in writing. Then consider what intermediate steps are necessary to complete the task. Make note of these intermediate steps in the correct order. Then check that the intermediate steps are realistic and determine how many of them you can handle in one day. With this plan, you can work through the individual actions, step by step, and get closer and closer to your goal.

# 2



## Evening Rituals

to Combat Sleep Disorders and Unrest.

### This method will help you with:

- Difficulty getting to sleep and other sleep problems
- Lying awake for a long time

After a tiring and busy day, it is often difficult to rest sufficiently in the evening to achieve adequate and restful sleep. The next day you wake up tormented and the ADHD seems to have taken hold even more. Concentration in particular is difficult, more errors occur and frustration increases - a vicious circle.

**But there are rituals and techniques that will help you get a good night's sleep!**

- 1.** A ritual — ideally performed at the same time — can teach your body to “wind down.” For example, a cup of tea to reminisce about the day, giving oneself encouragement (“Today I’ve completed an important task.”). Acknowledge pleasant moments.
- 2.** Your bedroom should always be a media-free zone. Smartphone, tablets and TVs are sleep killers. A better approach: Read a book to make yourself feel tired.
- 3.** Relaxation exercises are suitable for preparing your body for sleep, such as Jacobson’s progressive muscle relaxation (PMR) and yoga breathing techniques. Exhale deeply through your mouth, breathe through your nose four times, hold your breath after the fourth breath (seven seconds), breath out (eight seconds). Repeat this exercise four times.
- 4.** People with ADHD are often tormented in bed by thoughts that just don’t let up. But “pushing away” the thoughts makes everything worse. A better approach: Focus all your thoughts on clouds. Then watch as they come and go — just like clouds in the sky.
- 5.** If you always wake up at about the same time during the night, you probably have looked at the clock too often at night. It’s best to turn your alarm clock around before you fall asleep and say to yourself at night: “There is still time, I can carry on sleeping.”

# 3

## Five-Folder Strategy

### Minimise Chaos



#### This method will help you with:

- Problems with storage
- A tendency towards disorder and chaos

Many people with ADHD find it difficult to throw away documents for fear of overlooking something important.

It is critical that things that have been dealt with and things that have been left behind are not mixed up and can be found immediately. An easy-to-use filing system can provide you with the best possible support in this case.

This simple, manageable filing system has proven itself useful for reducing chaos:

- 1. Make room for five folders or for a small filing cabinet with five compartments.** (Preferably in the immediate vicinity of where you deal with post and invoices, see [OHIO-technique, Chapter 6](#))
- 2. Define five main categories, such as:** vehicle, health, banking, house, insurance
- 3. Only if absolutely necessary, divide the main categories into subcategories:** such as subdividing insurance into life insurance, liability, household)
- 4. Documents should be filed away as soon as they have been dealt with.** (See [OHIO-technique, chapter 6](#))

# 4 Four-Field Strategy

Make Decisions Easier

This method will help you with problems with:

- Postponing specific tasks (such as your tax return)
- Rash decisions when considering seemingly equivalent alternatives (such as holidays in Scotland or Ireland)

People with ADHD in particular often see short-term advantages and disadvantages as more important than longer-term ones, which are actually more important. It is therefore often the case that they make decisions too quickly. With the four-field strategy, you compare the short and long-term advantages and disadvantages against each other and thus can better assess consequences.

## Example: Finally completing your tax return

	Advantages	Disadvantages
Long-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Finally "off your back"</li><li>• Relieved that it's been completed</li><li>• Know that I can actually get things done</li><li>• Can pursue more exciting activities without a guilty conscience</li><li>• Tax return!</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Nothing thankfully</li></ul>
Short-term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Unfortunately, nothing</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Must invest time and neglect things that are more fun</li><li>• Must deal with paperwork and think things through</li></ul>

### According to the list you have to decide:

Do you put up with something negative in the short term to get something positive in the long term? Or do you choose the short-term positive variant, but then consciously accept the long-term negative consequences? That's also a legitimate decision!

Reward yourself when a task is completed! It's best to determine the reward beforehand, so you can create an additional incentive to start the task.

Read also [Chapter 1](#) (Salami tactic) und [Chapter 7](#) (ABC technique).

# 5

## Robot Mode

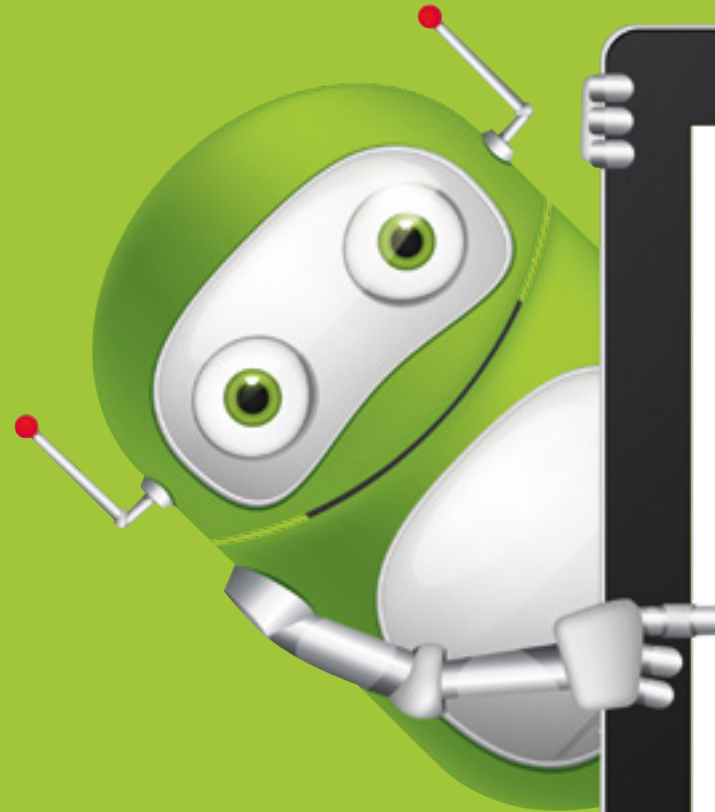
### Coping Better with Routine Activities



#### This method will help you with:

- Too many activities at once
- Distractibility
- Tendency to procrastinate, so "procrastinitis"

Ritualized procedures help you to perform recurring tasks instead of thinking about whether you actually feel like it. Nor should you ponder on it as you think about brushing your teeth in the morning, whether, for example, the filing should be done — it is simply done.



This technique is also about reducing distractions. Do not let yourself be guided by digressive thoughts or feelings of displeasure. Work through the planned process gradually as though you were in autopilot.

If documents have to be filed, then papers are punched and stapled like a robot until everything is complete. Only then do you start the next task.

The distracting thoughts are dealt with as described in [Chapter 8](#) ("Do not disturb" technique).

# 6

## OHIO Technique

### Getting a Grip on Paper Chaos and Bureaucracy



#### This method will help you with:

- Problems with storage
- Outstanding bills

Stacks of paper that move through the flat in different sizes and heights consist exclusively of mail and invoices which should be dealt with and filed. With the **OHIO** technique, you can set up a simple and manageable processing system. **OHIO**, freely translated, stands for "**Only Handle It Once.**" Take each thing in your hand only once. So open a letter for example, deal with it straight away, sort it and only then move onto the next thing.

#### So geht's:

- 1. Only ever do all the paperwork in one place.** It makes sense to have a filing tray where post and invoices are initially stored.
- 2. Define rules for bills.** For example, payment immediately after receipt, at the end of the week or at the end of the month.
- 3. Always keep pens, TAN lists, address book, stamps, etc. on hand.** This helps you avoid time lost while searching and reduces the likelihood of being distracted by more exciting things.
- 4. Enter a date for working and sorting on your calendar and keep to it just like other important dates.** Think about when you're most likely to have time and energy, and set yourself a realistic goal.

Ideally, from now on, deal with everything that comes through the letterbox using the OHIO technique. Old stacks can gradually be dealt with using the Salami Tactic ([Chapter 1](#))

# 7 ABC Technique

## Better Task Management

This method will help you with problems with:

- Frittering away time with work tasks
- Problems with work organisation and time management
- Procrastination, or "procrastinitis"

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Record upcoming tasks not on individual pieces of paper (which are easily misplaced or forgotten) but in a calendar or notebook.

Particularly well suited are calendars that show the week overview on one side and space for notes on the opposite side. This is then used for the to-do list.

Now assign the corresponding priority to the tasks on the to-do list:

### A-Task

These tasks are very urgent and most important for achieving your goal, so you must deal with them quickly to progress.

### B-Task

These activities are also important, but not as important as the A-tasks. They have to be done, but not immediately. Often these are activities that you can do over an extended period of time, or they are repetitive routine activities.

### C-Task

Tasks with this priority are not particularly important because they are of secondary importance for achieving your goal. But often these tasks are the most fun. Take a critical look at these steps. Often, these enjoyable activities can be cancelled without substitution.







# "Please do not disturb" Technique

## Avoiding Over-Stimulation

This strategy is about both reducing external distracting stimuli and about better internal focus. If possible, you should create a low-stimulus environment for yourself.

Hanging a "Please Do Not Disturb" sign on the door can help. Notification tones for emails, SMS messages and What's App should be switched off.

If possible, position your desk facing a white wall rather than the window. There should be only one thing in progress on the table, the thing that is being dealt with.

### This method will help you with:

- Being unfocused
- Lack of stimulus control
- Distractibility

If you are in a noisy environment, earplugs or sound-reducing headphones are recommended.

To combat internal distracting stimuli such as competing thoughts or restlessness, the mindful perception of the distracting thoughts, without pursuing them, will help, in addition to the timer technique ([Chapter 10](#)). It is helpful to note these thoughts and say, "I'll come back to that later, for now I'll stick to the task in hand."

# 9

## "Take a break" Strategy

for Keeping a Clear Head

### This method will help you with:

- Increase productivity
- Relax
- Recharge your batteries

Just as athletes incorporate rest periods into their training plan, your brain also needs enough time to regenerate, not only while asleep, but also while awake — again and again and preferably regularly.

The more balanced the relationship between pressure and relief, the better your performance. If the balance shifts too much to pressure, the opposite of what we want to achieve happens, and efficiency becomes significantly lower.

Here are some suggestions for consciously taking a break.



1. Every half an hour, take a break for about five minutes, or 10 minutes every hour.
2. Get up from your desk, go to the kitchen and have a drink. Open the window briefly to breathe fresh air. Circle your arms, or do a few "jumping jacks." This promotes cooperation between the two halves of the brain.
3. Focus on your five senses during breaks. Brief attentiveness exercises are helpful:
  - Mentally describe five things that you can see.
  - Mentally describe four things that you can feel.
  - Mentally describe three things that you can hear.
  - Mentally describe two things that you can smell.
  - Mentally describe one thing that you can taste.
4. Put a picture of your last holiday on your desk. Take a look at the picture during your break and let your thoughts wander to this place and consciously experience the pleasant feelings that are associated with it.
5. Take a short walk, or walk up and down the stairs for five minutes.

Taking several small breaks during your working day increase productivity. That should be allowed!

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information at:

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# 10

## Timer Technique

for Better Concentration

This method will help you with problems with:

- Distractibility
- Frittering away time with work tasks
- Problems with time management

**Important with this technique:** Do not think about the work task during the breaks. For example, when you get up from your desk, look out of the window or move around.

The more rigorously you apply this method, the more you can increase its effectiveness and less frustration will result.

At the beginning of a task or learning session, set a timer for 15 minutes. When the signal sounds, check that you are still focused on the task.



If this is the case, pause for a few minutes and then set the timer again for 15 minutes. If you notice that you have already lost your mental focus after 15 minutes, set the timer for the next sequence to 10 minutes, then take a short break again.



# 11

## Cash Strategy

### Controlling Finances Better

#### This method will help you with:

- Poor control of your finances
- Problems with impulsive spending

Remove all credit and debit cards from your wallet. Only cash should be available for a defined and period of time. This way you can see your budget and can better protect yourself from impulsive spending.

When shopping online, it is advisable to put the desired product in the virtual shopping cart, but to proceed to the check out only on the next day. This will give you time and allow you to rethink your purchase.

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# Pragmatic and Concrete Tips

for a Stress-Free Everyday Life

## Problem

"I'm always mislaying my front door key."

## Concrete Tip

Attach a key board directly next to the front door and always hang it there. Ask family members or fellow occupants for help: "If you see the key anywhere else, please hang it on the hook."

## Problem

"I take things and then forget them."

## Concrete Tip

Use alarms and reminders (for example, in your smartphone) that remind you in good time of what to do (for example, put out the dust bin).

## Problem

"I don't realise when I am distracted from work and indulge my thoughts."

## Concrete Tip

Put reminder symbols where you typically look when drifting away (such as red adhesive spots on the window).

## Problem

"I forget about time when something is very interesting."

## Concrete Tip

Define periods in which you dedicate yourself to a task. Set an alarm clock to remind you when the time has run out. For example, spend half an hour researching holidays on the internet. When the alarm rings, it's time for housework.

## Problem

"I always say yes immediately when I am asked to help, but then I realise that it's actually much too much for me."

## Concrete Tip

Wait on it and say, "I'll think about it and let you know tomorrow." Then you can decide in peace whether you really want to do it and have enough energy.

## Problem

"If I manage to start something, the phone rings and I have to start all over again after the phone call."

## Concrete Tip

Check whether you can set up a "quiet hour" and turn off all media. So you can devote yourself to the task without distractions. If this is not possible, choose a period in which the fewest disturbances are to be expected.

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