STUDYING AND ADHD

If you have ADHD or ADD, then you know that managing time and staying on some types of tasks until they are complete can be really tricky. Here are some tips to help you avoid the stress and anxiety of unfinished and overdue assignments and skipped classes.

Make Time Visible

- Use a semester-long calendar or planner that shows the whole semester and put it all on the one page. This way you can see everything that is coming up.
- Create colour coded zones and show all your commitments, such as sport, work, family, travel.

Why? You think you have two weeks to complete that short speech: but you may only have two free days when you can see all your commitments.

- Use STUDYSmarter online Assignment Date Calculator to Plan Backwards from due dates.

Focus Formula

Plan

- Break the assignment process into at least ten small subtasks.
- Set very short-term goals and immediate rewards. Don’t expect that the satisfaction of getting the job submitted in three weeks will be enough to motivate you through all the steps involved.

Example: I can text my friend when I have read this article.

Set up

- Make sure you have all your materials available and social media turned off (see over for a list of handy apps).
- Sprint: make yourself work on each subtask for a limited time (e.g. 30 minutes).
- Before you leave the task write down the next step for when you get back. This brain dump will help you to get started again.
- Work with a friend who is working alongside of you.

Focus tips

- Beware rabbit holes: keep asking yourself if this interesting trail you are going down is going to add 1% or 50% to your marks. Help to answer this by asking yourself what the underlying task/question is.
- Create a launch pad in your home. This is a place where you leave everything you need for the next day. Then you just grab your already packed bag and go.

Working Memory Tips

Externalise your working memory.

- Use pencil and paper, note books, diaries or a program like Evernote.
Go to class.
Even when class is not actively assessed or you feel it is too easy or boring, going to classes increases your chance of success and leads to better grades.

Set point of performance reminders.
Set alarms on your phone for fifteen minutes before important activities. Your next tutorial starts at 1.00 pm. At 12.00 you go to lunch with friends...the reminder needs to go off at 12.45.

Apps that block social media distractions.
There are a range of apps that aim to help you increase your focus and attention by selective blocking of social media, blocking the internet entirely or only allowing access to the relevant tools for your task. Forest has a built in reward strategy. Other apps that you might like to research include Freedom, Concentrate, Focus Booster, FocusWriter and LeechBlock.

Get Help at UWA
Attend STUDYSmarter’s free workshop: Managing Your Study Time
www.student.uwa.edu.au/learning/studysmarter/writesmart/workshops

Go to UniAccess to discuss Alternative Exam Arrangements and help with extensions.
If it all gets too stressful; you can access individual counselling with the UWA Counselling Service.
Call in at the Student Wellbeing Reception on the first floor of Student Central or telephone 64882423 to make an appointment with UniAccess or Counselling.

Further Support
- Stay in touch with your specialist. Starting Uni is probably not a good time to go off your medication.
- *Succeeding with Adult ADHD (2012)* by Abigail Levrini and Frances Prevatt provides practical evidence-based advice and exercises.
- The Learning and Attentional Disorders Society of WA (LADS) provides specialised support, information and advocacy. Go to ladswa.nationbuilder.com
- Consider consulting with an experienced Professional Certified ADHD Coach for one to one mentoring and skill development.

Like this Survival Guide? Why not check out…
Survival Guides: Avoiding Procrastination, Managing Stress, Effective Time Management

Want to Know More about STUDYSmarter?
Find out all about our service and resources at: www.studysmarter.uwa.edu.au

Any Suggestions?
We’d love to hear from you. Email us at study.smarter@uwa.edu.au

This resource was developed by the STUDYSmarter team for UWA students. When using our resources, please retain them in their original form with both the STUDYSmarter heading and the UWA logo.

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