

Treating Adult ADHD: Help Smart but Scattered Clients Strengthen Executive Skills

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<https://www.smartbutscatteredkids.com>

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What are executive skills?

- Brain-based skills (managed out of the frontal lobes) that take a minimum of 25-years to reach full maturation.
- They're the skills that support goal-directed behavior (or, more simply, the skills required to *execute* tasks).
- More commonly referred to as *executive functions*.

2

TRUE OR FALSE

There is one model of executive functioning that informs both research and clinical practice

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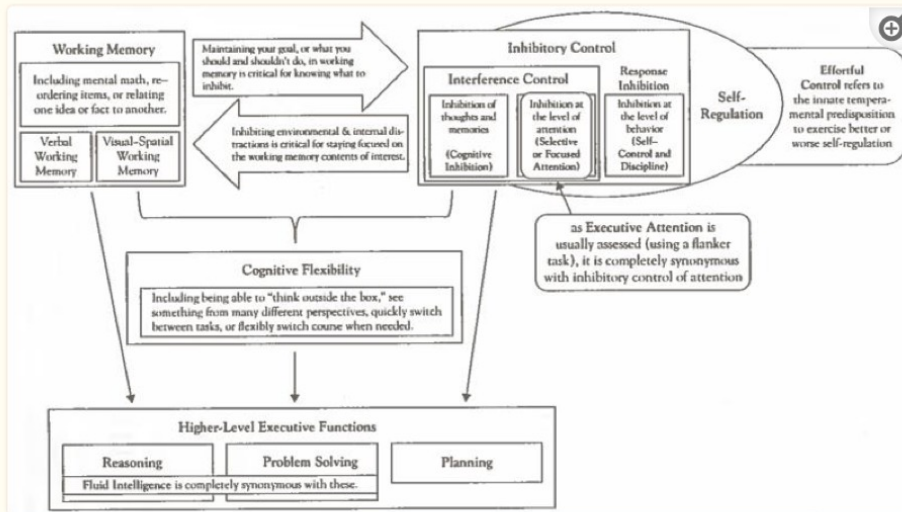
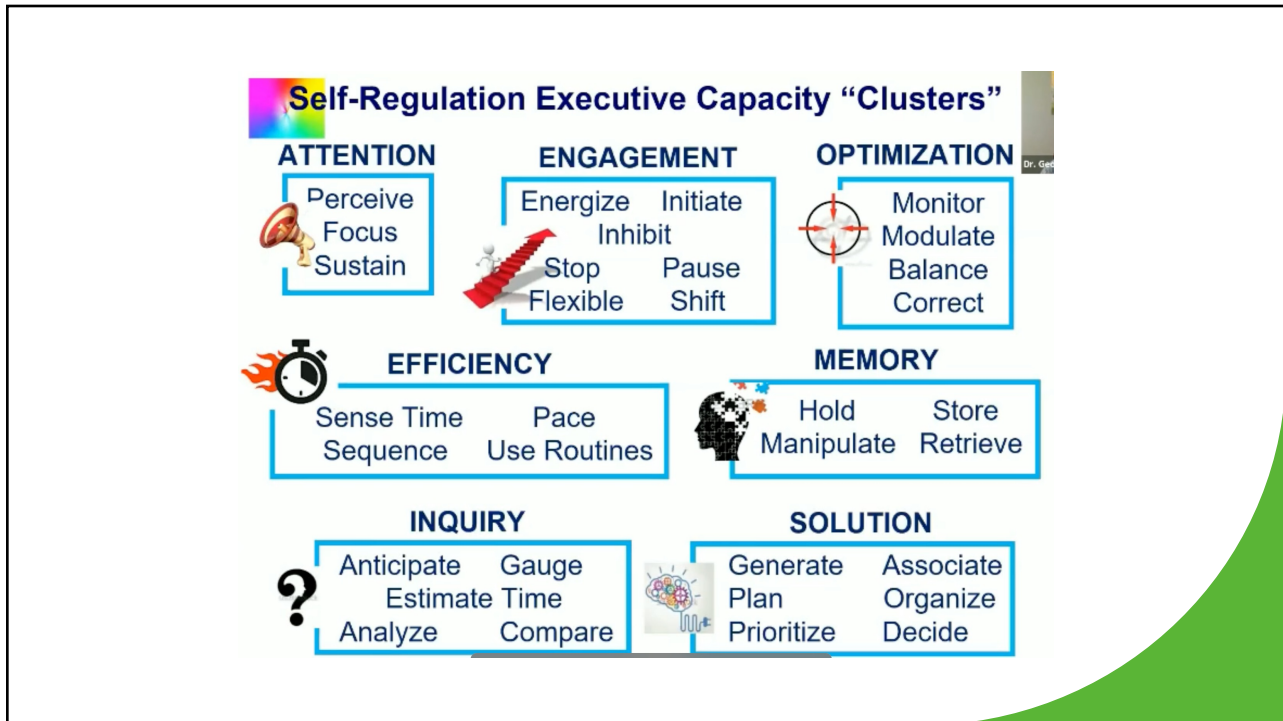


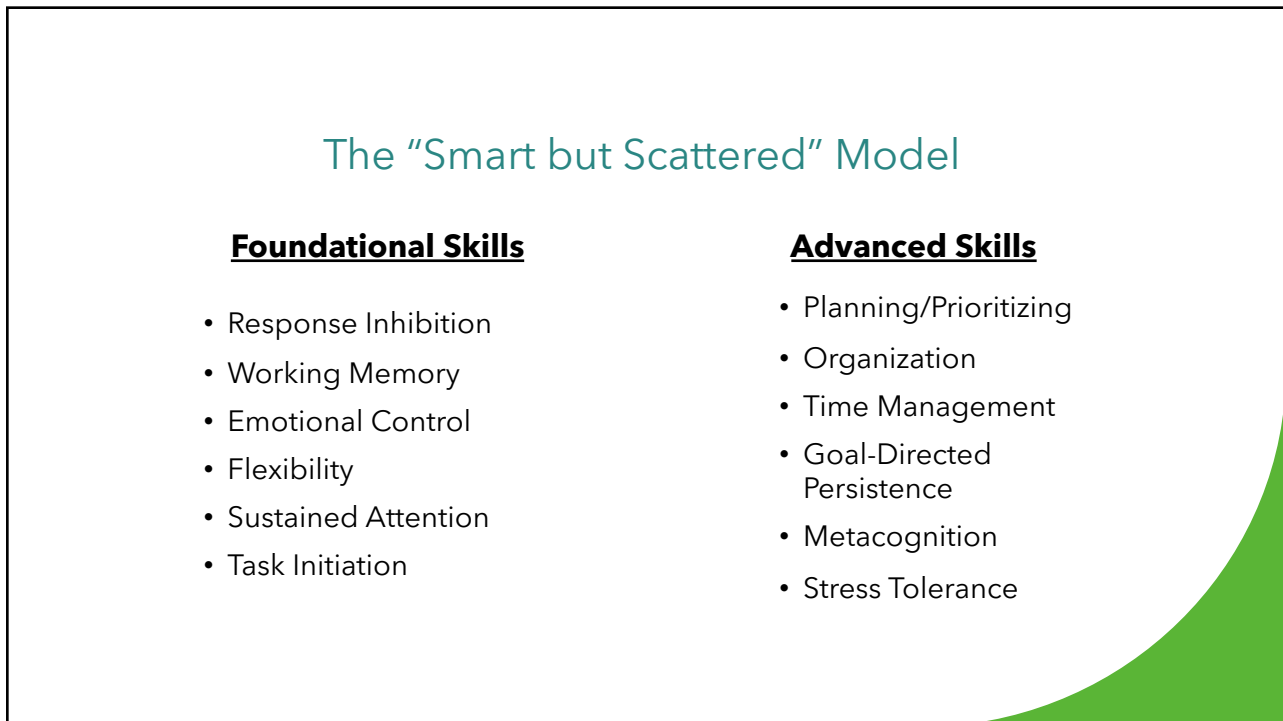
Figure 7.1

Executive functions.

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Executive Skills: Definitions

- Response Inhibition: The capacity to think before you act - this ability to resist the urge to say or do something allows us the time to evaluate a situation and how our behavior might impact it.

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QUIZ

People who are seen as having
a lot of willpower are:

1. Easily able to resist temptation when it is right in front of them
2. Work to structure their environment to reduce temptations

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Strategies: Response Inhibition

- Remove/sequester temptations
- Create a cueing system as a reminder to use self-control
- Build in “wait time”
- Allow a small reward in exchange for giving up a big one
- Announce your goal to a friend

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Executive Skills: Definitions

- Working Memory: The ability to hold information in memory while performing complex tasks. It incorporates the ability to draw on past learning or experience to apply to the situation at hand or to project into the future.

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The Magical Number Seven, Plus or Minus Two Some Limits on Our Capacity for Processing Information

George A. Miller
Harvard University

This paper was first read as an Invited Address before the Eastern Psychological Association in Philadelphia on April 15, 1955. Preparation of the paper was supported by the Harvard Psycho-Acoustic Laboratory under Contract N5ori-76 between Harvard University and the Office of Naval Research, U.S. Navy (Project NR 142-201, Report PNR-174). Reproduction for any purpose of the U.S. Government is permitted.
Received: May 4, 1955

My problem is that I have been persecuted by an integer. For seven years this number has followed me around, has intruded in my most private data, and has assaulted me from the pages of our most public journals. This number assumes a variety of disguises, being sometimes a little larger and sometimes a little smaller than usual, but never changing so much as to be unrecognizable. The persistence with which this number plagues me is far more than a random accident. There is, to quote a famous senator, a design behind it, some pattern governing its appearances. Either there really is something unusual about the number or else I am suffering from delusions of persecution.

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Limits of Working Memory

Working memory has a capacity of **about four chunks in young adults** (and fewer in children and old adults).

~Cowen, N. (2005). Working Memory Capacity.

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Working memory is “the mind’s very own whiteboard...but it’s a whiteboard with disappearing ink.”

~Amishi Jha, *Peak Mind*

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3 bugs...or are they features?

- **Disappearing ink**

“Your brain needs to automatically dump content at a rapid pace so there is flexibility and choice in what you continue to focus on...”

- **Fragility** (vulnerability to distraction)

“We need to be able to *rapidly* act without a sluggish delay.”

- **Capacity**

This reduces the noise in the system. If we remembered everything, we’d be “unresponsive to changing conditions.”

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Strategies: Working Memory

- Create a checklist
- Put visual cues in your environment
- Have a duplicate set (home/work)
- Apps/technology/alarms
- Mentally rehearse what you need to remember

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TRUE OR FALSE

Computer training to strengthen working memory is a multi-billion-dollar industry. Research shows that it is money well spent.

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Executive Skills: Definitions

- Emotional Control: The ability to manage emotions in order to achieve goals, complete tasks, or control and direct behavior.

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Strategies: Emotional Control

- Practice mindfulness meditation
- Use self-talk (e.g., mantras such as "5 deep breaths;" "Done is better than perfect")

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QUIZ

Self-talk can be an effective method for behavior change. In the “healthy eating habits” study, the group that did the best used which self-talk:

1. “I *can’t* eat unhealthy snacks.”
2. “I *don’t* eat unhealthy snacks.”

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Strategies: Emotional Control

- Practice mindfulness meditation
- Use self-talk (e.g., mantras such as “5 deep breaths;” “Done is better than perfect”)
- Avoid situations that trigger poor emotional control
- Use a relaxation strategy in the moment
- Rehearse in advance how you will handle an emotionally charged situation

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Executive Skills: Definitions

- Flexibility: The ability to revise plans in the face of obstacles, setbacks, new information or mistakes. It relates to an adaptability to changing conditions.

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Strategies: Flexibility

- Preplan to minimize surprises
- Walk away and come back later
- Learn to recognize the physiological cues and put in place a default strategy
- Create an *If...then* plan.
- Ask yourself "What's Plan B?"

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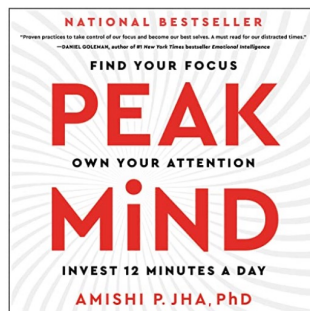
Executive Skills: Definitions

- Sustained Attention: The capacity to maintain attention to a situation or task in spite of distractibility, fatigue, or boredom.

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The most effective strategy: Mindfulness Practice



Our basic definition of mindfulness was this:
Paying attention to present-moment experience without conceptual elaboration or emotional reactivity.

...mindfulness training was the only brain-training tool that consistently worked to strengthen attention across our studies.

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QUIZ: Gloria Mark, author of *Attention Span*, has been tracking how long people sustain attention to computer screens in the workplace since 2004. At that time, she found they switched screens every two and a half minutes. More recent studies (2016-2021) found that people switch screens on average every...

1. 1 minute 35 seconds
2. 47 seconds
3. 23 seconds

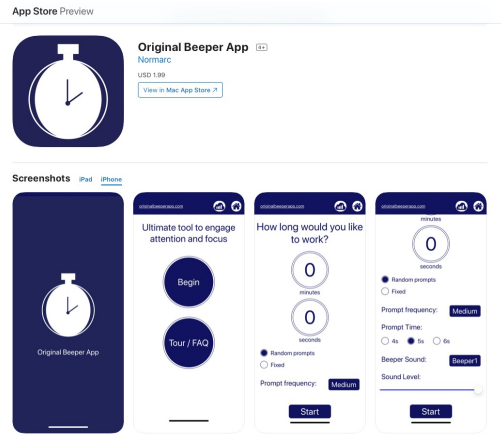
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Strategies: Sustained Attention

- Set a "Personal Best" goal (PB)
- Limit access to distractions (e.g., shut down access to time-wasting websites)
- Monitor on-task behavior

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Attention Self-Monitoring



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Another hi-tech option: iConnect

Preview

Username: Sally Smith
Monitoring location: Homework - -
Are you on task?
Date range: 5/9/2023 - 1/16/2025

Date	Positive	Negative	No Response	Interval	Monitor Question
5/9/23	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
5/25/23	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
6/1/23	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
1/3/25	~90%	~10%	0%	0%	0%
1/16/25	~90%	~10%	0%	0%	0%

<https://iconnect.ku.edu>

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Strategies: Sustained Attention

- Screen out unpredictable distractions (e.g., by listening to quiet music on an iPod)
- Pair the aversive task with something pleasant

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Executive Skills: Definitions

- Task Initiation: The ability to begin projects without undue procrastination, in an efficient or timely fashion.

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QUIZ

A study that looked at procrastination in college students found what percentage reported that procrastination was a problem for them.

1. 55%
2. 88%
3. 32%

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| waitbutwhy.com/2013/10/why-procrastinators-procrastinate.html



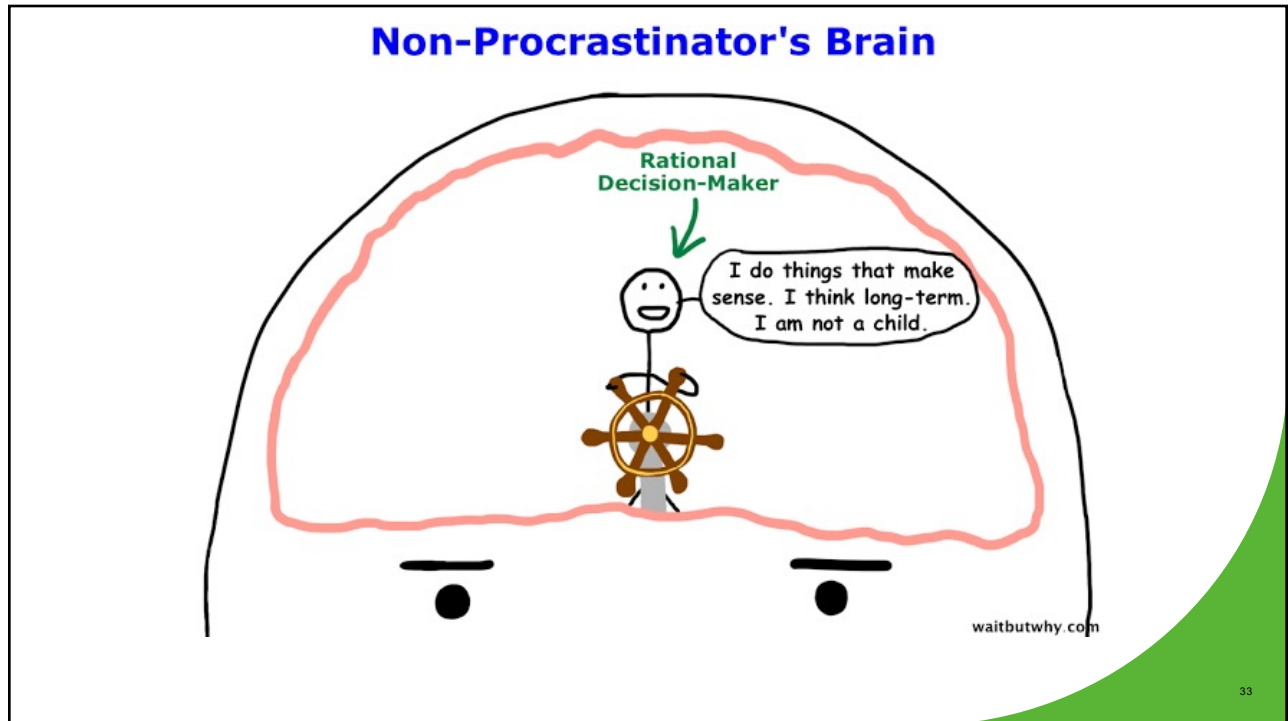
Why Procrastinators Procrastinate

By Tim Urban

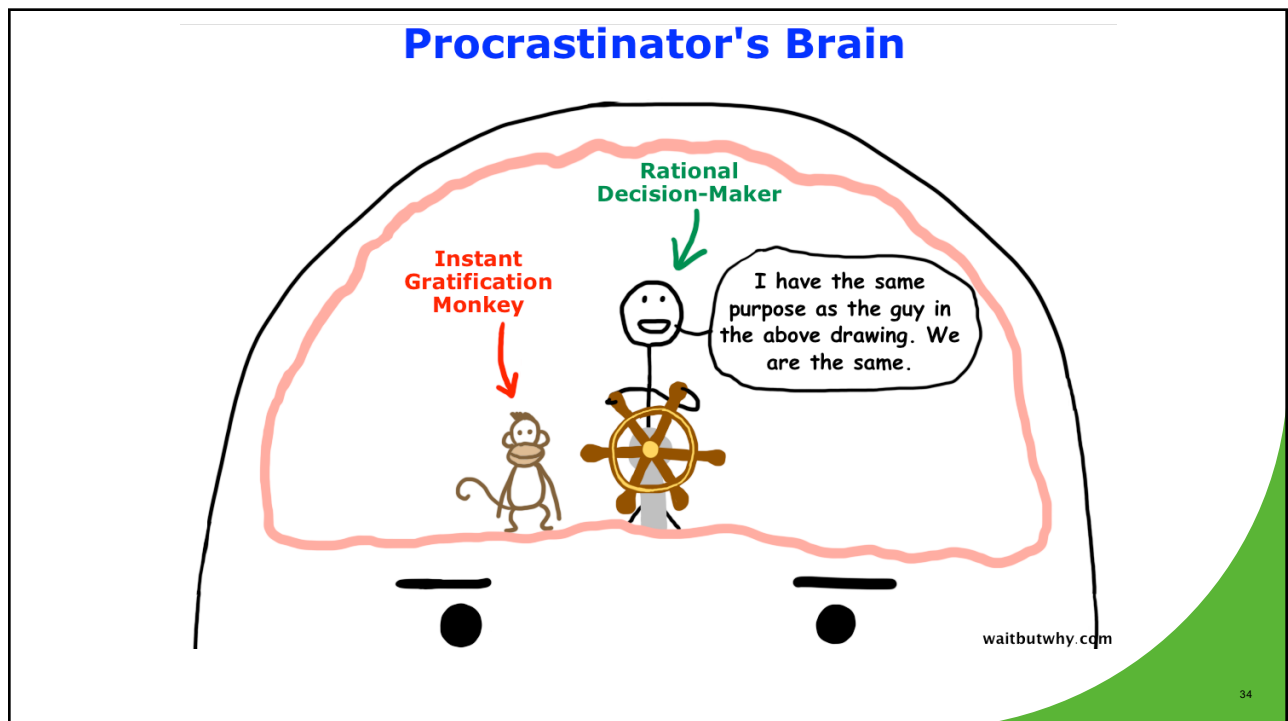
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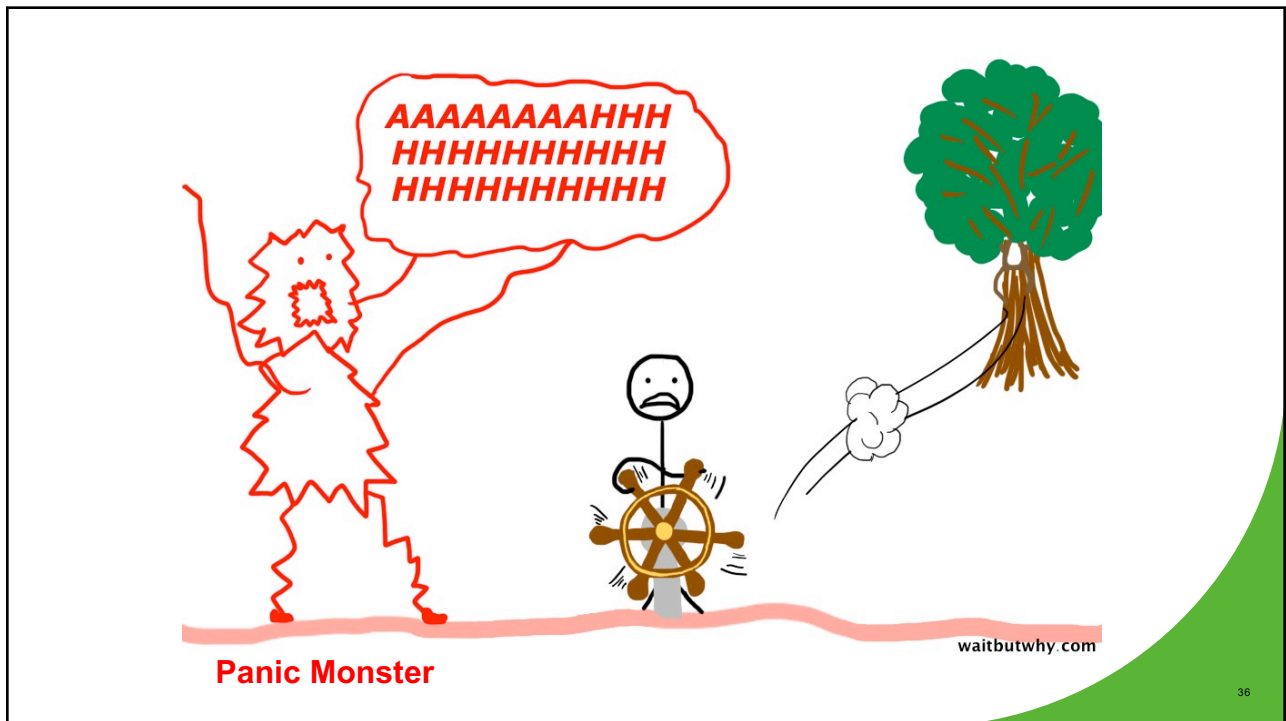
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For more laughs:

https://www.ted.com/talks/tim_urban_inside_the_mind_of_a_master_procrastinator?language=en

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Strategies: Task Initiation

- Make a plan with a start time
- Hold off a pleasurable activity until the task is done (or started)
- Suspend access to distractions
- Keep the degree of required effort low (e.g., by limiting the time spent on the aversive task).
- Technology (snooze alarm on phone)

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DON'T WANT TO DO LIST

Task	Date Entered	Date Done
Send out coach class email	4/24	4/24
Draft and send study group email	4/24	
Tidy study	4/24	4/24
Catch up on emails	4/24	4/24
Clean up computer desktop	4/24	
Wyoming agenda	4/24	4/24
Mammogram appointment	4/24	
Hill Center module	4/24	
Send handout to Jack	4/24	4/24
Double check with Community School	4/24	
Blurb for Kailey's book	4/24	
Coach course completion letter	4/24	4/24
Create graph of coach client	4/24	4/24
Pay <u>TuoPath</u>	4/24	4/24
Finish PowerPoint for Saturday	4/24	4/24

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What's Getting in the Way of Getting Things Done?

What's getting in the way of getting things done?

v	Obstacle	Strategy
	I don't understand what I'm supposed to do.	
	I can't think of how to start the task.	
	I could probably do the task, but it will take a lot of work and just the thought of that hurts my brain.	
	The task is way too boring for me even to contemplate doing it.	
	This task is pointless. I would get nothing out of doing it.	
	The conditions for working aren't perfect—when they are, I'll get started.	
	I have way too many things to do and don't know how to prioritize my time.	
	It's going to take way too long, and I don't want to commit that amount of time.	
	There are other things I'd rather be doing that are more fun or more important to me.	
	Wait, what task?	
	The task isn't going to affect my life in any big way so why bother?	
	Perfectionism—I'm not going to start because I know I won't be able to do work that meets my (impossibly) high standard.	
	I'm stressed out about other things (either internal or external) and can't focus because of these preoccupations. I'll do better if I wait until my life calms down.	
	I'm too tired. I don't have the energy to do this now.	
	I don't think I can do it—because I've always failed in the past—so why should I try?	
	I'm so far behind now, I'll never catch up!	
	I don't want to do this because if I accomplish this, I'm scared of what comes next.	
	There's no hard deadline so I can do it later	
	OTHER:	

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Executive Skills: Definitions

- Planning/Prioritization: The ability to create a roadmap to reach a goal or to complete a task. It also involves being able to make decisions about what's important to focus on and what's not important.

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Strategies: Planning/Prioritizing

- Use a planning template

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Planning Template							
Step	Component						
1	What is your desired outcome or goal?						
2	Brainstorm below everything you need to think about in carrying out your plan.						
3	What materials do you need to gather to complete your plan? These should include materials you already have as well as things you may need to purchase or requisition.						
	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Materials already available</th> <th>Materials to purchase</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Materials already available	Materials to purchase				
Materials already available	Materials to purchase						
4	What steps will you follow to carry out the plan?						
	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Steps (in order)</th> <th>How long will it take?</th> <th>End date (interim deadline)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Steps (in order)	How long will it take?	End date (interim deadline)			
Steps (in order)	How long will it take?	End date (interim deadline)					
5	Do you have the necessary skill set to carry out the plan? If not, how will you handle this?						
6	If others are involved, who will oversee the project?						
	Who will do what?						
	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Who</th> <th>Task</th> <th>Completion date</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Who	Task	Completion date			
Who	Task	Completion date					
7	Review: Revisit each section above and ask yourself, "Is it accurate? Is it complete?" Check (✓) when done.						
	<input type="checkbox"/> Step 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Step 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Step 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Step 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Step 5 <input type="checkbox"/> Step 6						

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Strategies: Planning/Prioritizing

- Use post-it notes to identify steps, so they can be easily re-arranged

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Strategies: Planning/Prioritizing

- Use a planning template
- Use post-it notes to identify steps, so they can be easily re-arranged
- Ask for help from someone who's good at planning
- Practice the skill by starting with something fun to plan

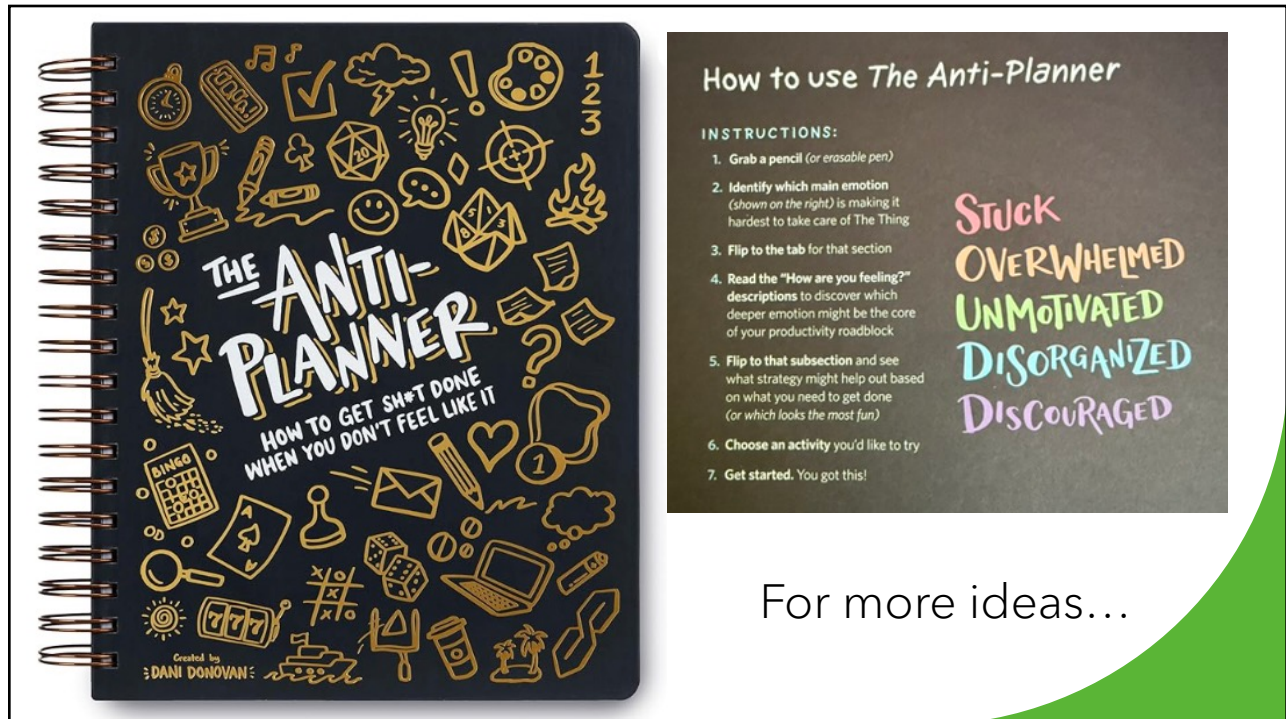
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White Board Planner with Post-its

GOALS	TODO	THIS MONTH	THIS WEEK	TODAY	DONE
#1		☐☐	☐☐	☐	☐☐
#2	☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐	☐	☐☐	☐
#3	☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐	☐		☐
#4	☐☐☐☐	☐	☐	☐	
#5	☐☐		☐		

TO-DO	IN PROGRESS	ON HOLD	DONEZO
☐☐	☐☐	☐☐	☐☐
☐☐			☐

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Executive Skills: Definitions

- Organization: The ability to create and maintain systems to keep track of information or materials.

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Strategies: Organization

- Do something fun while you're getting organized
- Start VERY SMALL (both in terms of time and space)
- Work off a checklist
- Trade off with someone who's good at organization

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Executive Skills: Definitions

- Time Management: The capacity to estimate how much time one has, how to allocate it, and how to stay within time limits and deadlines. It also involves a sense that time is important.

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Strategies: Time Management

- Practice time estimation
- Set your watch ahead to “trick yourself”
- Ask for help (someone to cue you)
- Use smart phone alarms

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Advice from my friend Marcy:

- “Having **accountability partners** combined with **price pacts** has elicited the quickest surge in my improvement this year. For example, I would often run 5-10 minutes late picking up my son or leaving to go somewhere that wasn't urgent. It drove him crazy. So, I told him that every minute I am late, I owe him \$1. That's helped me a lot. I might run late once a week compared to 5 times a week and only be 5 minutes. This improvement was almost immediate!”
- **Price Pacts with Friends if going out:** If I am late, I pay the whole bill. If I am on time - they buy my coffee.

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Advice from my friend Marcy:

- **Price pact with my husband:** We have a price pact for non-urgent things like going to the gym or out for lunch. If I am on time, I can get 20.00, if I am late, I have to do supper dishes. My husband suggested that the first week I get a 5-minute buffer. Thereafter not even a minute late. This has really kept me accountable, and I have been early on one occasion! NEVER has this happened!
- All these pacts are fun and have acted as a springboard, but the satisfaction of being on time and not irritating others is starting to become enough for me. 😊 Although, I do like to see the 20's compounding. To help my response inhibition, I am telling myself to save the money for something I like.

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Advice from my friend Marcy:

- **Asking advice:** I often ask advice from my husband, son or friends with strong time management. I will ask: "These are my priorities today. Do I have enough time for this?" I get them to explain the why or why not and this has also REALLY helped.
- **Timers and Apps:** I apply the Pomodoro Technique, and that helps me. For things I don't want to do, I reduce the time to 10- 20 minutes rather than 25 (for some reason, it feels easier). I combine this with the app FLORA. This app really helps me stay focused and keeps me off my phone. It shuts all the apps down except for the ones you choose (in my case I only keep my clock on for timer). This has helped with Sustained Attention.



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Executive Skills: Definitions

- Goal-directed persistence: The capacity to have a goal, follow through to the completion of the goal and not be put off or distracted by competing interests.

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Strategies: Goal-Directed Persistence

- Choose carefully; start small and be specific
- Use mental contrasting, implementation intention and process visualization
- Identify potential roadblocks and systematically eliminate them
- Build automaticity (do the same thing at the same time every day)
- Post visual reminders of the goal

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Executive Skills: Definitions

- Metacognition: The ability to stand back and take a birds-eye view of oneself in a situation. It is an ability to observe how you problem solve. It also includes self-monitoring and self-evaluative skills (e.g., asking yourself, "How am I doing? or How did I do?").

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Strategies: Metacognition

- Practice self-reflection (especially following successes)
- Create a system for analyzing mistakes

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Learning from Mistakes

Task or situation	What went wrong?	What did I do?	What cues did I miss?	Next time I will . . .

LEARNING FROM MISTAKES: EXAMPLE

Task or situation	What went wrong?	What did I do?	What cues did I miss?	Next time I will . . .
<i>Date with girlfriend</i>	<i>Went to sports bar; watched game while we ate.</i>	<i>Didn't talk to my girlfriend; ignored her.</i>	<i>Angry facial expression; irritation in her voice.</i>	<i>Take her to a restaurant without a television.</i>
<i>New job responsibility at work</i>	<i>I thought I understood what I needed to do, but I didn't.</i>	<i>Did task wrong; left out important parts.</i>	<i>The final product didn't match specifications and I failed to see that.</i>	<i>Go through task instructions before I start; make sure I understand what I'm supposed to do; check my work against instructions when I'm done.</i>

From *The Smart but Scattered Guide to Success* by Peg Dawson and Richard Guare. Copyright © 2016 The Guilford Press. Purchasers of this book can photocopy and/or download enlarged versions of this material (see the box at the end of the table of contents).

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Strategies: Metacognition

- Practice self-reflection (especially following successes)
- Create a system for analyzing mistakes
- Learn to ask for feedback from others
- Use a problem-solving template

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Problem-Solving System

What is the problem?

Problem Solving Template

What are some possible things I could try to solve the problem?

What will I try first?

If that doesn't work, what's another option (Plan B)?

How did it go? Did my solution work?

What might I do differently the next time?

From Dawson P. And Guare R. (2016). The Smart but Scattered Guide to Success. New York: The Guilford Press.

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Executive Skills: Definitions

- Stress Tolerance: The ability to thrive in stressful situations and to cope with uncertainty, change, and performance demands.

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Strategies: Stress Tolerance

- Create a personalized stress inoculation plan

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Stress Inoculation Therapy



Educate clients about stress and its effects in general and help them identify the specific stressors they are experiencing.



Teach coping strategies tailored to individual clients and have them rehearse those strategies.



Practice the skills using a variety of simulation methods (e.g., role-playing, visualization, self-talk, cognitive restructuring)

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Which executive skills pose the biggest challenge for your clients?

Go to [menti.com](https://www.menti.com)

Use the code: 1271 9028

Rank order the top 3 challenges

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Strategies: Stress Tolerance

- Create a personalized stress inoculation plan
- Steer clear of stressful situations
- Mentally prepare yourself for anticipated stressful situations
- Build in recovery time

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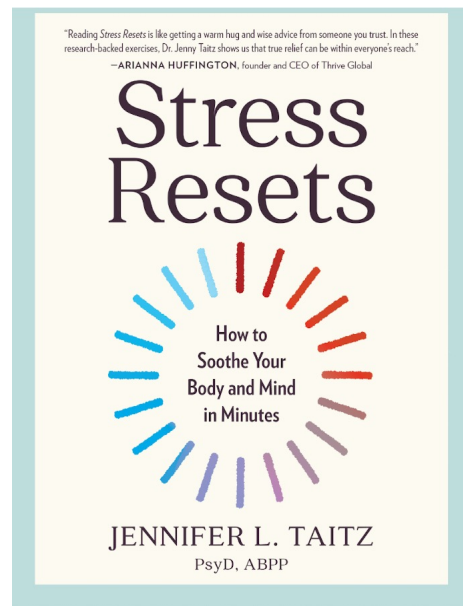
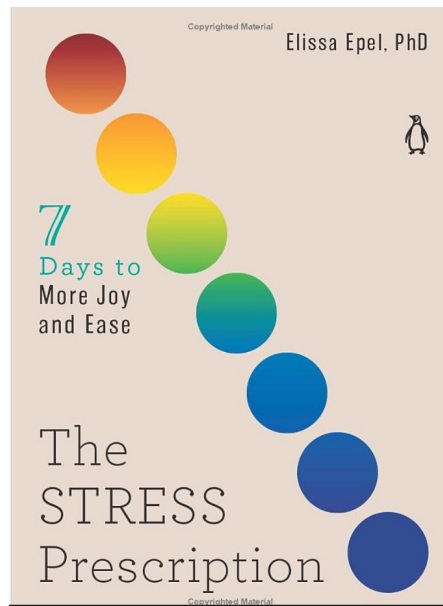
QUIZ

Which of the following is true about stress?

1. All stress is bad for you.
2. Acute stress builds resilience
3. Chronic stress builds resilience

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Two helpful resources



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Use DBT Distress Tolerance Strategies

- **A:** Activities - Engage in activities that distract or provide a positive focus.
- **C:** Contributing - Help others or engage in acts of kindness to shift focus away from personal distress.
- **C:** Comparisons - Compare your situation to others who may be in worse situations to gain perspective.
- **E:** Emotions - Use opposite emotions to shift feelings (e.g., watching a funny movie to counteract sadness).
- **P:** Pushing away - Temporarily set aside the distressing thoughts and emotions.
- **T:** Thoughts - Focus on something more pleasant or engage in mental distraction.
- **S:** Sensations - Use physical sensations (like squeezing an ice cube) to ground oneself and refocus.

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Published: September 15, 2008

FACEBOOK TWITTER GOOGLE+ EMAIL SHARE

The Child's Developing Brain

Different areas of the brain mature at different rates, which helps explain many of the intellectual and emotional changes seen in children, teens and young adults. While no two children develop in exactly the same way, scientists have been able to link certain developmental milestones to changes in brain tissue, observed by MRI scans taken repeatedly over years. Move the slider below to see how the brain matures. Red, yellow and orange patterns indicate undeveloped brain tissue, while green, blue and purple indicate a maturing of the brain.

EARLY DEVELOPMENT
In the first few years of life, areas of the brain devoted to basic function change at a rapid pace. By age 4, primary senses and basic motor skills are almost fully developed. The child can walk, hold a crayon and feed himself.

SENSATION
Areas responsible for sensations like touch are almost as developed as they ever will be.

VISION
The part of the brain governing vision has already matured.

4 years old

Birth Age 4 Age 9 Age 15 Age 21

Age 21: Executive Functions

Go to Age 9

Brain images courtesy of Dr. Paul Thompson, University of California, Los Angeles. Source information provided by Dr. Jay Giedd, National Institutes of Mental Health. Produced by Tara Parker-Pope, Jon Huang, and Mike Mason/The New York Times

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How do executive skills develop?



Through a process called myelination. Myelin acts as insulation, increasing the speed with which nerve impulses are transmitted. The faster the impulse, the better the skill.

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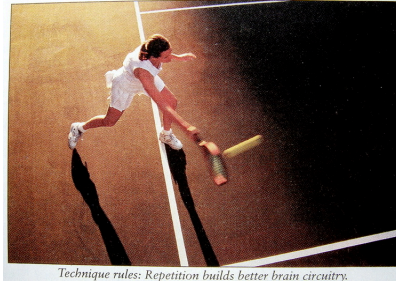
Myelin performs 2 functions



- Increases the speed with which nerve cells fire.
- Decreases the recovery time, enabling the nerve cell to fire again quickly.
- The result: a 3,000-fold increase in the amount of information transmitted per second.

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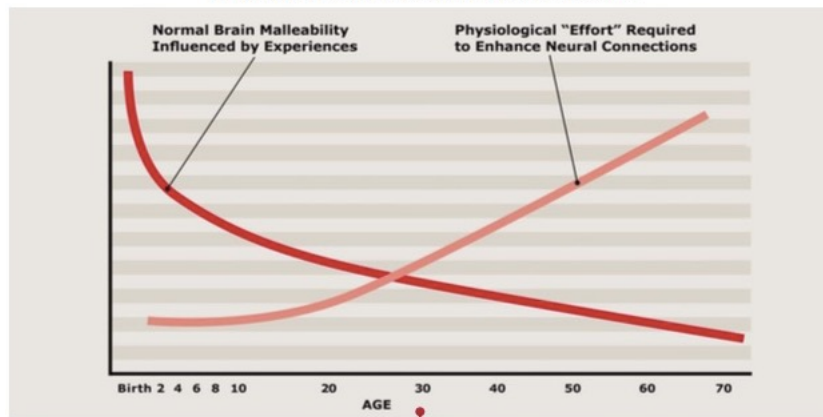
All skills, including executive skills, improve with practice...



The more you practice, the better the skill. Practice also makes the task less effortful.

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The Ability to Change Brains and Behavior Decreases Over Time



7 As the maturing brain becomes more specialized to assume more complex functions, it is less capable of reorganizing and adapting. For example, by the first year, the parts of the brain that differentiate vocal sounds are becoming specialized to the language the baby has been exposed to and are already starting to lose the ability to recognize important sound distinctions found in other languages. As the brain prunes away the circuits that are not used, those that are used become stronger and increasingly difficult to alter over time. Declining plasticity means it's easier and more effective to influence a baby's developing brain architecture than it is to rewire parts of its circuitry in the adult years. In other words, we can "pay now" by ensuring positive conditions for healthy development, or "pay more later" in the form of costly remediation, health care, mental health services, and increased rates of incarceration. *Graph Source: P. Levitt (2009)*

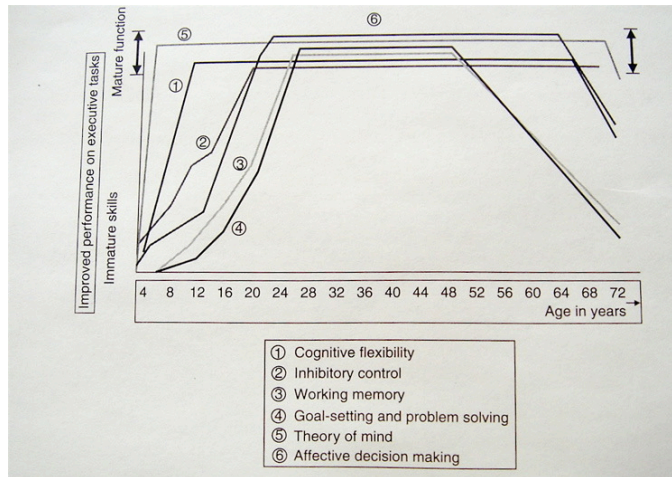
www.developingchild.harvard.edu

Center on the Developing Child HARVARD UNIVERSITY

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Frontal lobe development across the lifespan

[from Anderson, V.A., Jacobs, P., & Anderson, P. (Eds.). (2008). Executive functions and the frontal lobes: A lifespan perspective.



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ScienceDaily®

Your source for the latest research news

Cognitive Decline Begins In Late 20s, Study Suggests

Date: March 20, 2009

Source: University of Virginia

A new study indicates that some aspects of peoples' cognitive skills — such as the ability to make rapid comparisons, remember unrelated information and detect relationships — peak at about the age of 22, and then begin a slow decline starting around age 27.

"This research suggests that some aspects of age-related cognitive decline begin in healthy, educated adults when they are in their 20s and 30s," said Timothy Salthouse, a University of Virginia professor of psychology and the study's lead investigator.

His findings appear in the current issue of the journal *Neurobiology of Aging*.

Salthouse and his team conducted the study during a seven-year period, working with 2,000 healthy participants between the ages of 18 and 60.

Participants were asked to solve various puzzles, remember words and details from stories, and identify patterns in an assortment of letters and symbols.

Many of the participants in Salthouse's study were tested several times during the course of years, allowing researchers to detect subtle declines in cognitive ability.

Top performances in some of the tests were accomplished at the age of 22. A notable decline in certain measures of abstract reasoning, brain speed and in puzzle-solving became apparent at 27.

Salthouse found that average memory declines can be detected by about age 37. However, accumulated knowledge skills, such as improvement of vocabulary and general knowledge, actually increase at least until the age of 60.

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Now let's look at ADHD

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QUIZ

According to the CDC, the most current data show what percentage of U.S. adults have a diagnosis of ADHD

1. 6 percent
2. 3 percent
3. 9 percent

Of those adults with an ADHD diagnosis, what percent are treated with stimulant medications

- A. 1 in 9
- B. 1 in 3
- C. 1 in 7

78

What's the relationship between executive skills and ADHD?

- Most of the symptoms associated with ADHD could be classified as executive skills, including all the Inattention symptoms and most of the Hyperactive/Impulsive symptoms.
- Thus, all adults with ADHD have executive skill challenges but not all adults with executive skill challenges have ADHD

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Typical Profiles of ADHD Adults

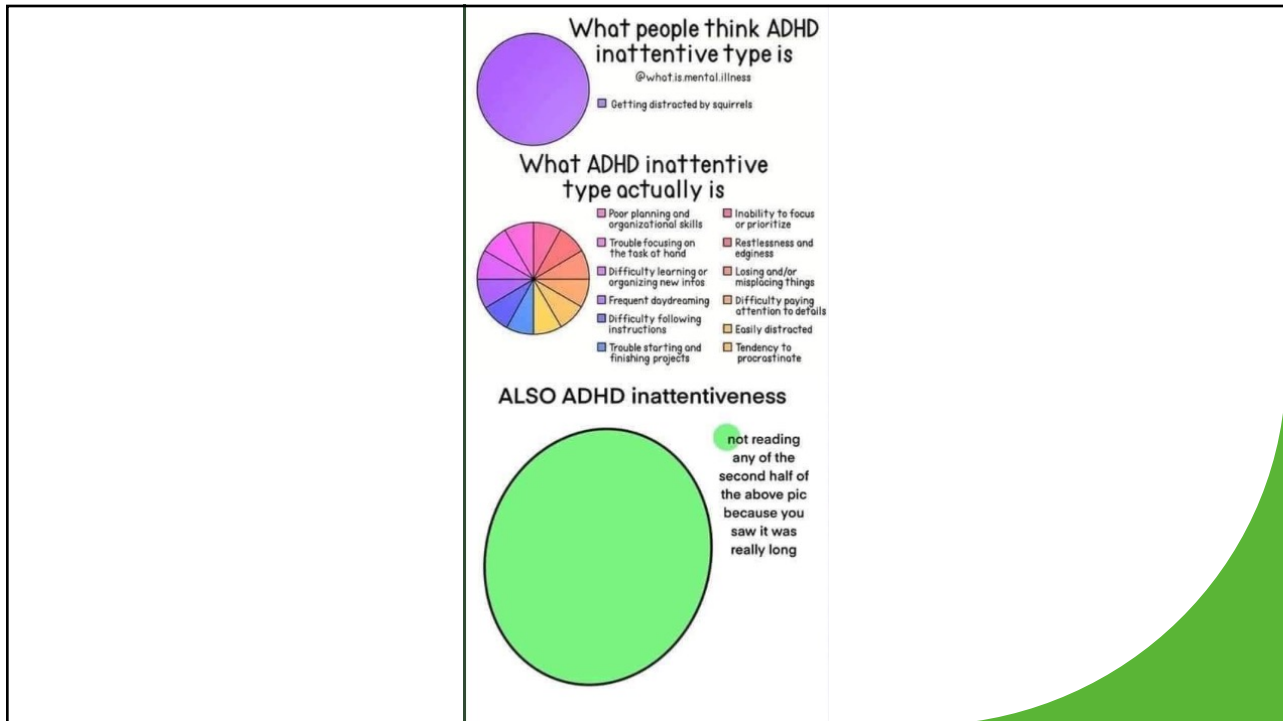
Executive Skill Strengths

- Flexibility
- Metacognition
- (Stress tolerance)

Executive Skill Weaknesses

- Task initiation
- Sustained attention
- Time management
- (Response inhibition)

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The impact of ADHD on Behavior

Factors that influence the ability of someone with ADHD to focus: ICNU (Interest, Challenge, Novelty, Urgency).

Example: doing the dishes

- INTERESTING? Not even close
- CHALLENGING? Not really
- NOVEL? Nah
- URGENT? Not yet

Will the dishes get cleaned? Only when they're needed *right now*

82

Biological Underpinnings

A study published by the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) has found differences in dopamine processing in the reward pathways in the brains of subjects with ADHD compared to non-ADHD controls. The study focused on the nucleus accumbens (a brain structure involved with reinforcement and reward) and suggests that people with ADHD may release dopamine at a lower rate compared to normal controls or might have a net dopamine deficit.

83

Biological Underpinnings

Because dopamine enhances the level of interest a person attaches to a stimulus, people who release dopamine at a lower rate might find it more difficult to work up the enthusiasm to act on stimuli they don't find naturally appealing.

Implication: students with ADHD find it much more difficult to apply themselves to tasks that are not intrinsically interesting to them.

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Interest-Based vs. Importance-Based

- **Neurotypical Brains:** Can prioritize tasks based on **Importance** (consequences, deadlines).
- **ADHD Brains:** Prioritize based on **Interest** (novelty, urgency, challenge, or passion).
- This shift in understanding explains why people with ADHD can **hyperfocus** on something they love but can't focus at all on something "important" but boring.

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ScienceDaily[®]

Your source for the latest research news

Brain scans show children with ADHD have faulty off-switch for mind-wandering

Date: January 10, 2011

Source: Wellcome Trust

Brain scans of children with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) have shown for the first time why people affected by the condition sometimes have such difficulty in concentrating. The study, funded by the Wellcome Trust, may explain why parents often say that their child can maintain concentration when they are doing something that interests them, but struggles with boring tasks.

Using a 'Whac-a-Mole' style game, researchers from the Motivation, Inhibition and Development in ADHD Study (MIDAS) group at the University of Nottingham found evidence that children with ADHD require either much greater incentives -- or their usual stimulant medication -- to focus on a task. When the incentive was low, the children with ADHD failed to "switch off" brain regions involved in mind-wandering. When the incentive was high, however, or they were taking their medication, their brain activity was indistinguishable from a typically-developing non-ADHD child.

ADHD is the most common mental health disorder in childhood, affecting around one in 50 children in the UK. Children with ADHD are excessively restless, impulsive and distractible, and experience difficulties at home and in school. Although no cure exists for the condition, symptoms can be reduced by medication and/or behavioural therapy. The drug methylphenidate (more often known by the brand name Ritalin) is commonly used to treat the condition.

Previous studies have shown that children with ADHD have difficulty in 'switching-off' the default mode network (DMN) in their brains. This network is usually active when we are doing nothing, giving rise to spontaneous thoughts or 'daydreams', but is suppressed when we are focused on the task before us. In children with ADHD, however, it is thought that the DMN may be insufficiently suppressed on 'boring' tasks that require focused attention.

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DSM-V Diagnosis: 3 Types of ADHD

- Predominantly Inattentive Presentation
- Predominantly Hyperactive/Impulsive Presentation
- Combined Presentation

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DSM-5® DIAGNOSTIC CRITERIA FOR ADHD IN ADULTS¹

All criteria must be met for a diagnosis of ADHD in adults¹:

- 1 Five or more symptoms of inattention and/or ≥ 5 symptoms of hyperactivity/impulsivity must have persisted for ≥ 6 months to a degree that is inconsistent with the developmental level and negatively impacts social and academic/occupational activities.
- 2 Several symptoms (inattentive or hyperactive/impulsive) were present before the age of 12 years.
- 3 Several symptoms (inattentive or hyperactive/impulsive) must be present in ≥ 2 settings (eg, at home, school, or work; with friends or relatives; in other activities).
- 4 There is clear evidence that the symptoms interfere with or reduce the quality of social, academic, or occupational functioning.
- 5 Symptoms do not occur exclusively during the course of schizophrenia or another psychotic disorder, and are not better explained by another mental disorder (eg, mood disorder, anxiety disorder, dissociative disorder, personality disorder, substance intoxication, or withdrawal).

Diagnosis should be based on a complete history and evaluation of the patient.

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ADHD SYMPTOMS OF INATTENTION	ADHD SYMPTOMS OF HYPERACTIVITY/ IMPULSIVITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes careless mistakes/lacks attention to detail Difficulty sustaining attention Does not seem to listen when spoken to directly Fails to follow through on tasks and instructions Exhibits poor organization Avoids/dislikes tasks requiring sustained mental effort Loses things necessary for tasks/activities Easily distracted (including unrelated thoughts) Is forgetful in daily activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fidgets with or taps hands or feet, squirms in seat Leaves seat in situations when remaining seated is expected Experiences feelings of restlessness Has difficulty engaging in quiet, leisurely activities Is "on-the-go" or acts as if "driven by a motor" Talks excessively Blurts out answers Has difficulty waiting their turn Interrupts or intrudes on others

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Assessing ADHD/Executive Skills in Adults
<u>ALWAYS</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clinical interview • Rating Scales
<u>SOMETIMES</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clinic tests of attention or executive functioning

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Behavior Rating Scales

- Barkley Deficits in Executive Functioning (BDEFS)–Guilford Press (guilford.com)
- Behavior Rating Inventory of Executive Functioning-Adults (BRIEF-A)–PAR (parinc.com)
- Brown ADD/Executive Functions Scales (pearsonclinical.com)

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Working with ADHD Adults

Building a Change Plan Using a Coaching Model

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Coaching

An intervention strategy in which a coach works with a person to set goals (long-term, short-term, or daily) designed to enhance executive skills, lead to improved self-regulation and result in goal attainment.

93

The Coach's Approach in the Client's Goal-Setting

Working with clients in a way that is collaborative rather than prescriptive, honors the person's autonomy and self-direction, and is more about evoking than installing. This involves at least a willingness to suspend an authoritarian role, and to explore client capacity rather than incapacity, with a genuine interest in the client's experience and perspective. (Stephen Andrew re: MI, 2015)

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The Coach's Communication Style in the Goal-Setting Process

- **Open-ended questions:** The kind of questions that open the door to more words from the client than from you, as opposed to yes-no questions used to collect information or data
- **Affirmation:** Affirmations comment favorably on a specific positive trait, attribute, or strength of the person that endures over time
- **Reflection:** Accurate empathic reflections involve listening not only to what the person says, but also for what the person *means*.
- **Summarizing:** A special form of empathic reflection where you collect statements from a part of or the whole of the conversation. (Stephen Andrew re: MI, 2015)

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Key components of coaching for executive skills and behavior change

- Goal-setting and goodness-of-fit.
- Regular coaching sessions to make short-term, specific plans to achieve goals.
- Helping people develop and practice self assessment and management strategies to compensate for weaknesses associated with executive skills or use strategies to improve those skills.
- Correspondence training.
- Implementation intentions, mental contrasting, mental simulations to enhance self-management and overcome obstacles.

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Why Goal-Setting?

Extensive empirical research has documented the value of goal-setting in promoting high levels of performance—in both adults and children.

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Goals serve 4 primary purposes

- They *direct behavior* (toward task-relevant and away from task-irrelevant, immediate gratification behavior)
- They *energize*
- They encourage *persistence*
- They *motivate* people to discover and use task-relevant knowledge and skills

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Impact of ADHD on Goal Achievement

- Reduced capacity for self-regulation of behavior
- Behavior is more determined by immediate environment and its demands - that is, behavior becomes "context dependent"
- Result is being "locked in the present" with reduced capacity for future, goal-oriented behavior and increased susceptibility to gratification of immediate needs and wants

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How Executive Skill Weaknesses Affect Goal-Directed Actions (Barkley, 2012)

- Using executive skills, especially those that are weak, requires significant effort.
- This results in rapid energy depletion and susceptibility to context-dependent behavior.
- Fatigue and stress weaken executive skills.

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The Role of Effort in Executive Skills Interventions

Factors that can replenish the resource pool

- Physical exercise
- Relaxing, meditating following a few minutes of ES exertion
- Visualizing the good outcomes/rewards as a result of successful execution
- Periodic, small rewards throughout the ES task.
- Self-efficacy statements prior to and during task
- Generating positive emotions

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Goal Setting and Implementation:

- Minimize the focus on the long-term goal, especially in the early phases of the process. Short time horizons and small steps that require only limited time and effort are critical.
- Try to insure the person has the skill set to attain the initial goals.

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Goal Setting and Implementation:

For the best chance of success, the ADHD adult needs to succeed in the early stages. Success builds behavioral momentum and confidence, establishes realistic expectations, and builds a working memory of successful problem solving for future reference.

103

The Coaching Process with ADHD Adults

- Collect background information
- Identify tentative long-term goal

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Part I Initial interview

What brought you here?

What are your biggest sources of frustration?

At work

At home

In your personal relationships

What are some things you think are going well?

At work

At home

In your personal relationships

How do you like to spend your leisure time?

If you were going to try to change one thing or improve at one thing in any of these contexts (work, home, relationships), what would you want to tackle?

Are you willing to create a goal around this and work towards it? What's a first pass at describing the goal?

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The Coaching Process with ADHD Adults

- Assess executive skills

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Executive Skills Questionnaire

Read each item below and then rate that item based on the extent to which you agree or disagree with how well it describes you. Use the rating scale below to choose the appropriate score. Then add the three scores in each section. Use the key at the end of the questionnaire to determine your executive skill strengths (two to three highest scores) and weaknesses (two to three lowest scores).

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Tend to disagree	Tend to agree	Agree	Strongly agree

Item	Your score
1. I don't jump to conclusions.	___
2. I think before I speak.	___
3. I make sure I have all the facts before I take action.	___
TOTAL	___
4. I have a good memory for facts, dates, and details.	___
5. I am very good at remembering the things I have committed to do.	___
6. I seldom need reminders to complete tasks.	___
TOTAL	___
7. My emotions seldom get in the way of my job performance.	___
8. Little things do not affect me emotionally or distract me from the task at hand.	___
9. When frustrated or angry, I keep my cool.	___
TOTAL	___
10. No matter what the task, I believe in getting started as soon as possible.	___
11. Procrastination is usually not a problem for me.	___
12. I seldom leave tasks to the last minute.	___
TOTAL	___

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Part II Assess Executive Skills

Step 1: Complete the ESQ

Step 2: Identify strengths and weaknesses

<p>Executive Skill Strengths</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>Executive Skill Weaknesses</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
--	---

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Executive Skills Assessment in Specific Contexts

Work: compare job demands with executive skills profile to determine “goodness of fit.”

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WORKSHEET 1		
Executive Skills in the Workplace		
<p>Step 1. Using the Executive Skills Questionnaire you completed in Chapter 2, check off your three executive skill strengths and your three executive skill weaknesses. If you had a lot of “tie scores,” make a decision about which three skills you most want to focus on as strengths and weaknesses.</p>		
<u>Executive skill strengths</u>	<u>Executive skill weaknesses</u>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Response inhibition	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Working memory	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Emotional control	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Task initiation	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sustained attention	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Planning/prioritizing	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Organization	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Time management	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Flexibility	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Metacognition	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Goal-directed persistence	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Stress tolerance	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Step 2. Think about your job requirements. What aspects of your job do you find easiest or most pleasurable and what do you find hardest or most aversive?</p> <p>What aspects of your job do you find easiest to do (that is, least likely to put off or most efficient at)?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. <p>What aspects of your job do you find require the most effort (that is, most likely to procrastinate on or least efficient at)?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. <p>Step 3. Look at the easy and hard parts of your work. Do they align with your executive skill strengths and weaknesses? We’ve found this is often the case. You may use this information with subsequent worksheets, or this knowledge may simply serve to produce an <i>aha</i> moment (for example, <i>That’s why I hate returning phone calls—because I’m weak in emotional control and flexibility and I’m afraid the person I will be calling will be mad at me for something I didn’t do well).</i></p>		

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WORKSHEET 3
Executive Skill Weaknesses

Executive skill weakness	How do you use this skill in your work?	Are there ways you can adjust your job to allow you to minimize your need to use this skill?	If you were going to focus on one task or one situation in which you need to use this skill and would like to get better at it, what would you choose?	What might you do?
1.				
2.				
3.				

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Executive Skills Assessment in Specific Contexts

Home: match specific home maintenance tasks with executive skill strengths.

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Your List of Low- and High-Effort Chores

Low-effort chores, tasks, activities	High-effort chores, tasks, activities

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Your Coping Strategies

Effortful chores, tasks, activities	Possible coping strategy

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Executive Skills Assessment in Specific Contexts

Relationships: compare partners' profile to identify "tension points" due to profile differences.

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Relationships Executive Skills Questionnaire

Directions: Read each pair of descriptions and decide which of the two options best describes you. Then decide *how often* the statement is true for you (sometimes, often, most of the time). When you have completed all the items for yourself, go back and follow the same process for the person you're in a relationship with. Decide which of the two statements best describes him or her and then choose how often the description applies. Then look for patterns of similarities and differences between self and other.

RESPONSE INHIBITION

	Sometimes	Often	Most of the time				Sometimes	Often	Most of the time	
Self	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Carefully deliberates before making a decision	OR	Jumps to conclusions	Self	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Self	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Thinks before responding; doesn't interrupt	OR	Blurts out without thinking; may interrupt	Self	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Self	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Gathers all the facts before acting	OR	Acts before getting all the facts ("gut instinct")	Self	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

WORKING MEMORY

	Sometimes	Often	Most of the time				Sometimes	Often	Most of the time	
Self	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Has a head for details (memory like an elephant)	OR	Has difficulty remembering details	Self	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Self	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Remembers what has to be done	OR	Forgets what he or she has promised to do	Self	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Self	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Follows through on obligations without reminders	OR	Needs reminders to get things done	Self	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

(continued)

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The Coaching Process with ADHD Adults

- Determine if coaching is appropriate
- Consider goodness-of-fit
- Identify potential obstacles to goal attainment
- Revise long-term goal

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Part III Refine Long-Term Goal

Step 3: Look at goodness-of-fit: Do you have the executive skills you need to achieve your goal? How can you use your executive skill strengths? Are there ways you can work around the weaknesses or bypass them altogether?

Step 4: Are there barriers or obstacles you need to overcome in order to reach your goal?

Potential obstacle	Ways to overcome the obstacle

Long-Term Goal Statement:

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GOAL: Organizing Home Office Workspace

Potential obstacle	Ways to overcome the obstacle
1. 'It will take too long' – self-talk	Deliberately break down what feels like an overwhelming task into smaller pieces. Set a time limit and date for each piece to reach completion of overall task.
2. 'I want to use the time this task will take to relax, visit with friends and family, knit/watch TV instead, engage in summer-holiday-related-trips/activities or other 'more essential' home tasks like preparing meals, doing household chores, etc.' – self-talk	'Formally book 'relaxation time' into my daily schedule and consciously savor it! Be more formal and self-disciplined in my at-home scheduling of time and tasks to accomplish this goal during the heat of summer.
3. Limited physical storage for files & clothes in the bedroom/office	Find other location in my home with ease of access for storage of important documents and/or file more documents electronically.
4. When I begin to sort documents I 'rabbit-hole' – I move into micro-filing within different categories before the overall sort is complete. This causes me to lose momentum...I fatigue and stop before the original task has been completed.	Post the goal for the daily task in writing before I start – when I start to feel the urge to micro-file, look at the printed goal on the wall, push aside the desire to micro-file, and continue with the overall sort. In other words remind myself of the overall goal, periodically, while engaged in the task: avoid distractions.
5. 'I really don't like doing this' – self talk.	Replace this cognition with 'I will feel better about myself knowing this important information and clothes are organized and easy to locate. The outcome of this task/process is a gift to me!'

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An alternative: Try D.U.M.B. Goals

S.M.A.R.T. Goals

- ★ S Specific
- ★ M Measurable
- ★ A Actionable
- ★ R Realistic
- ★ T Timely

The Organized Military Life

D.U.M.B. Goals

- ★ D Dream-Driven
- ★ U uplifting
- ★ M Method-Driven
- ★ B Behavior-Triggered

The Organized Military Life

<https://theorganizedmilitarylife.com/how-to-use-smart-and-dumb-goals-for-organization/>

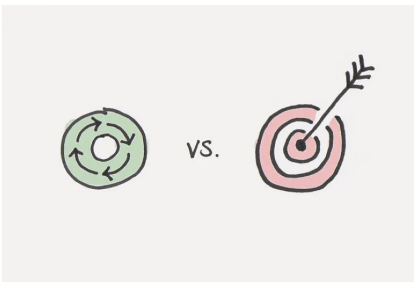
120

Or consider
this:

**Forget About Setting Goals. Focus
on This Instead.**

James Clear · Follow
Published in Mission.org · 6 min read · Jan 31, 2018

177K 73



The Difference Between Goals and Systems

What's the difference between goals and systems?

- If you're a **coach**, your goal is to win a championship. Your system is what your team does at practice each day.
- If you're a **writer**, your goal is to write a book. Your system is the writing schedule that you follow each week.
- If you're a **runner**, your goal is to run a marathon. Your system is your training schedule for the month.
- If you're an **entrepreneur**, your goal is to build a million dollar business. Your system is your sales and marketing process.

Now for the really interesting question:

If you completely ignored your goals and focused only on your system, would you still get results?

For example, if you were a basketball coach and you ignored your goal to win a championship and focused only on what your team does at practice each day, would you still get results?

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The Coaching Process with ADHD Adults

- Create mini-goals (SMART) goals

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Part IV
Write a SMART Goal

SMART goals are Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Time-Bound

Rules for writing goal statements:

1. Use clear, specific language.
2. Start your goal statement with TO + a VERB
3. Write your goal statement using SMART Goal Criteria
4. Avoid using negative language. Think positive!

An example of a goal statement:

- *To run the mini marathon in May and complete the 10 mile race in under 1 hour to beat my personal best time.*

SMART Goal Statement:

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SMART Goal Example 1

By the end of two weeks from today I will have enrolled in a GED preparation program within commuting distance from my apartment and go to class one night per week. I will arrange for my neighbor to take care of the children on that night. During week three I will go to the first preparation class.

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SMART Goal Example 2

I will search online for Personal Care Attendant jobs and by Friday of this week, identify four possible jobs that I am interested in, and apply for those jobs by Monday of next week.

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SMART Goal Example 3

SMART Goal Statement:

By Sunday May 7th at 8 PM will have three things: 1) a one-page write up of the main points and causal arguments for my talk; 2) I will also have 5-7 post-its or mini pictures to illustrate key moments in the talk; 3) a run sheet delineating the time for each section.

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The Coaching Process with ADHD Adults

- Identify strategies for supporting SMART goal attainment

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3 Key Strategies to Compensate for Weaknesses in Executive Skill Behaviors, or to Enhance Skills to Enable Goal Achievement

1. Environmental Modifications
2. Short-term incentives for motivation
3. Skill Enhancement

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Part V
Identify Strategies to Support Goal Attainment

Strategy	Examples (check off choices)
Environmental Modifications	
Change the physical or social environment	<input type="checkbox"/> Remove distractions (e.g., turn off social media) <input type="checkbox"/> Create visual reminders <input type="checkbox"/> Avoid settings with temptations <input type="checkbox"/> Seek out people who support your goal; avoid people who don't <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
Modify the task	<input type="checkbox"/> Make task shorter/build in breaks <input type="checkbox"/> Use 1-10 scale to adjust effort <input type="checkbox"/> Pair unpleasant task with something pleasant <input type="checkbox"/> Kill 2 birds with one stone (pair unpleasant task with another obligation) <input type="checkbox"/> Break task into very small pieces and turn into a to-do checklist <input type="checkbox"/> Use technology <input type="checkbox"/> Turn open-ended tasks into closed-ended tasks <input type="checkbox"/> Build in variety or choice (or turn into a game) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
Enlist the help of others	<input type="checkbox"/> Someone to cue you: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Someone to report to: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Someone who will be a cheerleader: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Post goal/progress on social media <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

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Part V
Identify Strategies to Support Goal Attainment

Strategy	Examples (check off choices)
Environmental Modifications	
Change the physical or social environment	<input type="checkbox"/> Remove distractions (e.g., turn off social media) <input type="checkbox"/> Create visual reminders <input type="checkbox"/> Avoid settings with temptations <input type="checkbox"/> Seek out people who support your goal; avoid people who don't <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
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Enlist the help of others	<input type="checkbox"/> Someone to cue you: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Someone to report to: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Someone who will be a cheerleader: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Post goal/progress on social media <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

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Part V
Identify Strategies to Support Goal Attainment

Strategy	Examples (check off choices)
Environmental Modifications	
Change the physical or social environment	<input type="checkbox"/> Remove distractions (e.g., turn off social media) <input type="checkbox"/> Create visual reminders <input type="checkbox"/> Avoid settings with temptations <input type="checkbox"/> Seek out people who support your goal; avoid people who don't <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
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Enlist the help of others	<input type="checkbox"/> Someone to cue you: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Someone to report to: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Someone who will be a cheerleader: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Post goal/progress on social media <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

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3 Key Strategies to Compensate for Weaknesses in Executive Skill Behaviors, or to Enhance Skills to Enable Goal Achievement

1. Environmental Modifications
2. Short-term incentives for motivation
3. Skill Enhancement

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Short-term Incentives for Motivation		
<input type="checkbox"/> A preferred activity to do once the work is done: _____		
<input type="checkbox"/> Choose something from a reward menu: _____		
<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____		
<input type="checkbox"/>		

REWARD MENU CATEGORIES		
Food/snacks	Beverages	Entertainment
Hobbies	Exercises	Social
Shopping	Sightseeing	Travel

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3 Key Strategies to Compensate for Weaknesses in Executive Skill Behaviors, or to Enhance Skills to Enable Goal Achievement

1. Environmental Modifications
2. Short-term incentives for motivation
3. Skill Enhancement


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Practice the Skill						
What will you practice?						
When will you practice?						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Time:	Time:	Time:	Time:	Time:	Time:	Time:
How long will the practice session last?						
What is your start time?		Date:	Time:	Back-up date:	Time:	
What cues will you use to remind yourself to follow your plan?						

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Cognitive Strategies to Support Practice

- Mental contrasting
- Implementation intentions
- Process visualization



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Practice Strategies: Mental Contrasting

This is a visualization technique created by Gabriele Oettingen (2000) to enhance the likelihood that implementations will be successful.

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Practice Strategies: Mental Contrasting

1. Think about several positive aspects associated with goal attainment
2. Identify the *most positive* aspects and visualize the benefits (with as much detail as possible)
3. Think about several obstacles that might get in the way of goal attainment.
4. Home in on the biggest obstacles and take a few moments to visualize those obstacles.

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Practice Strategies: Implementation Intentions

Goal setting research shows that the more precise the goal, the more likely it is to be accomplished—anticipating obstacles increases the likelihood that you will overcome them.

If X happens, then I will do Y. OR when [trigger], I will [action]

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Practice Strategies: Process Visualization

In this step, visualize, with as much sensory detail as possible, encountering the obstacles to goal attainment and then successfully overcoming them.

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Practice the Skill

- **Mental contrasting:**
 1. Think about several positive aspects associated with goal attainment:

 2. Identify the *most positive* aspects and visualize the benefits (with as much detail as possible)

 3. Think about several obstacles that might get in the way of goal attainment.

 4. Hone in on the biggest obstacles and take a few moments to visualize those obstacles.

- **Implementation Intentions:**
 FORMULA: When [trigger], I will [action]

- **Process visualization:** Visualize, with as much sensory detail as possible, encountering the obstacles to goal attainment and then successfully overcoming them.

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GOAL: Organizing Home Office Workspace

Potential obstacle	Ways to overcome the obstacle
1. It will take too long – self-talk	Deliberately break down what feels like an overwhelming task into smaller pieces. Set a time limit and date for each piece to reach completion of overall task.
2. I want to use the time this task will take to relax, visit with friends and family, knit/watch TV instead, engage in summer-holiday-related trips/activities or other 'more essential' home tasks like preparing meals, doing household chores, etc.' – self-talk	'Formally book 'relaxation time' into my daily schedule and consciously savor it! Be more formal and self-disciplined in my at-home scheduling of time and tasks to accomplish this goal during the heat of summer.
3. Limited physical storage for files & clothes in the bedroom/office	Find other location in my home with ease of access for storage of important documents and/or file more documents electronically.
4. When I begin to sort documents I 'rabbit-hole' I move into micro-filing within different categories before the overall sort is complete. This causes me to lose momentum... I fatigue and stop before the original task has been completed.	Post the goal for the daily task in writing before I start – when I start to feel the urge to micro-file, look at the printed goal on the wall, push aside the desire to micro-file, and continue with the overall sort. In other words remind myself of the overall goal, periodically, while engaged in the task: avoid distractions.
5. I really don't like doing this' – self talk	Replace this cognition with 'I will feel better about myself knowing this important information and clothes are organized and easy to locate. The outcome of this task/process is a gift to me!

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	<p>□ Mental contrasting:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Think about several positive aspects associated with goal attainment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My study will be a comfortable place to work. • I will be able to find things easily. • I can work more efficiently and have more free time. 2. Identify the <i>most positive</i> aspects and visualize the benefits (with as much detail as possible) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I will be able to find things easily. • I can work more efficiently and have more free time. 3. Think about several obstacles that might get in the way of goal attainment. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'It will take too long' - self-talk • I want to use the time this task will take to relax, visit with friends and family, knit/watch TV instead, engage in summer-holiday-related-trips/activities or other 'more essential' home tasks like preparing meals, doing household chores, etc.' - self-talk • When I begin to sort documents I 'rabbit-hole' - I move into micro-filing within different categories before the overall sort is complete. This causes me to lose momentum...I fatigue and stop before the original task has been completed. • 'I really don't like doing this' - self talk. 4. Home in on the biggest obstacles and take a few moments to visualize those obstacles. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'It will take too long' - self-talk • 'I really don't like doing this' - self talk.
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	<p>□ Implementation Intentions: FORMULA: When [trigger], I will [action] When I tell myself "It will take too long," I will give myself permission to work for only 5 minutes.</p> <p>When I tell myself 'I really don't like doing this' I will remind myself of how happy I'll feel when the study is clean, and I will give myself a reward when the work session is over</p> <p>□ Process visualization: Visualize, with as much sensory detail as possible, encountering the obstacles to goal attainment and then successfully overcoming them.</p> <p>Picture yourself approaching your study and thinking, "I really don't like doing this." Think about how that makes you feel. Now picture yourself saying to yourself, "I'm going to be so happy when I have a clean study. And as soon as I finish, I'll make myself some microwave popcorn." Picture yourself putting the microwave popcorn on top of the microwave. Now picture yourself finishing the task and turning on the microwave. Also, picture what that clean study will look like and how much better you feel when you can find things easily.</p>
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happier
human WHAT ABOUT HAPPINESS?

Keep Your Product Launch on Track

by Amit Amin

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The Coaching Process with ADHD Adults

- Write and carry out the action plan

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Part VI
Create an Action Plan

Action Plan for Achieving SMART goal

Steps to Follow To Complete Goal	Target Completion Date	Done!
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		

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SMART Goal Example 1

By the end of two weeks from today I will have enrolled in a GED preparation program within commuting distance from my apartment and go to class one night per week. I will arrange for my neighbor to take care of the children on that night. During week three I will go to the first preparation class.

Action steps:

1. Contact local adult ed program by this Wednesday and find out closest GED program to me that meets at night.
2. Call the program on Wednesday and enroll.
3. Ask my neighbor tomorrow if she can watch the kids for the same night each week for two hours starting in three weeks.
4. Go to the first preparation class two weeks from Wednesday.

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SMART Goal Example 2

I will search online for Personal Care Attendant jobs and by Friday of this week, identify four possible jobs that I am interested in, and apply for those jobs by Monday of next week.

Action steps: (starts on a Tuesday)

1. Start online search for jobs by tomorrow (Wednesday) at 10 am, keep searching until I find two possible jobs and save the applications.
2. Start searching for the other two jobs on Thursday at 10 am, keep searching until I find two more jobs and save the applications.
3. Contact my 3 references for permission to use them by 4 pm Friday.
4. Complete the 4 job applications by Sunday night at 6pm and submit them.

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SMART Goal Example 3

SMART Goal Statement:

By Sunday May 7th at 8 PM will have three things: 1) a one-page write up of the main points and causal arguments for my talk; 2) I will also have 5-7 post-its or mini pictures to illustrate key moments in the talk; 3) a run sheet delineating the time for each section.

Action Plan for Achieving SMART goal

Steps to Follow To Complete Goal	Target Completion Date	Done!
1. Set 20-minute timer to work on written version	May 2, 11 PM	
2. Set a 10-minute timer to work on written version and 10 min to sketch at least 3 candidate images for the talk.	May 3, 9 AM	
3. Set 10 minutes timer to create draft run sheet for talk; Set 10 minute timer to craft 3 more candidate images for the talk	May 4, 8 PM	
4. Set 20 min timer to revise written draft; 20 min to revise run sheet (w 2-3 key images); 5 min t to send draft ideas to R, J, D	May 5, 9 PM	

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HOW TO FORM A HABIT

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CONTEXT (FRICTION)

Source: Wood, Wendy. 2020.
Good Habits, Bad Habits.
Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
Kindle Edition.

Two aspects:

1. Restraining forces—forces that increase friction, making it more difficult for you to engage in the habitual behavior
2. Driving forces—forces that decrease friction standing between you and the habitual behavior

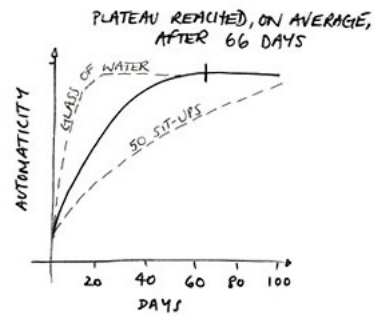
152

REPETITION

Source: Lally, P., van Jaarsveld, H.M., Potts, H.W.W., Wardle, J. (2009) How are habits formed: Modelling habit formation in the real world. *European Journal of Social Psychology*.

In Lally's study, it took anywhere from 18 days to 254 days for people to form a new habit.

When the researchers examined the different habits, many of the participants showed a curved relationship between practice and automaticity of the form depicted below (solid line). On average a plateau in automaticity was reached after 66 days. In other words it had become as much of a habit as it was ever going to become.

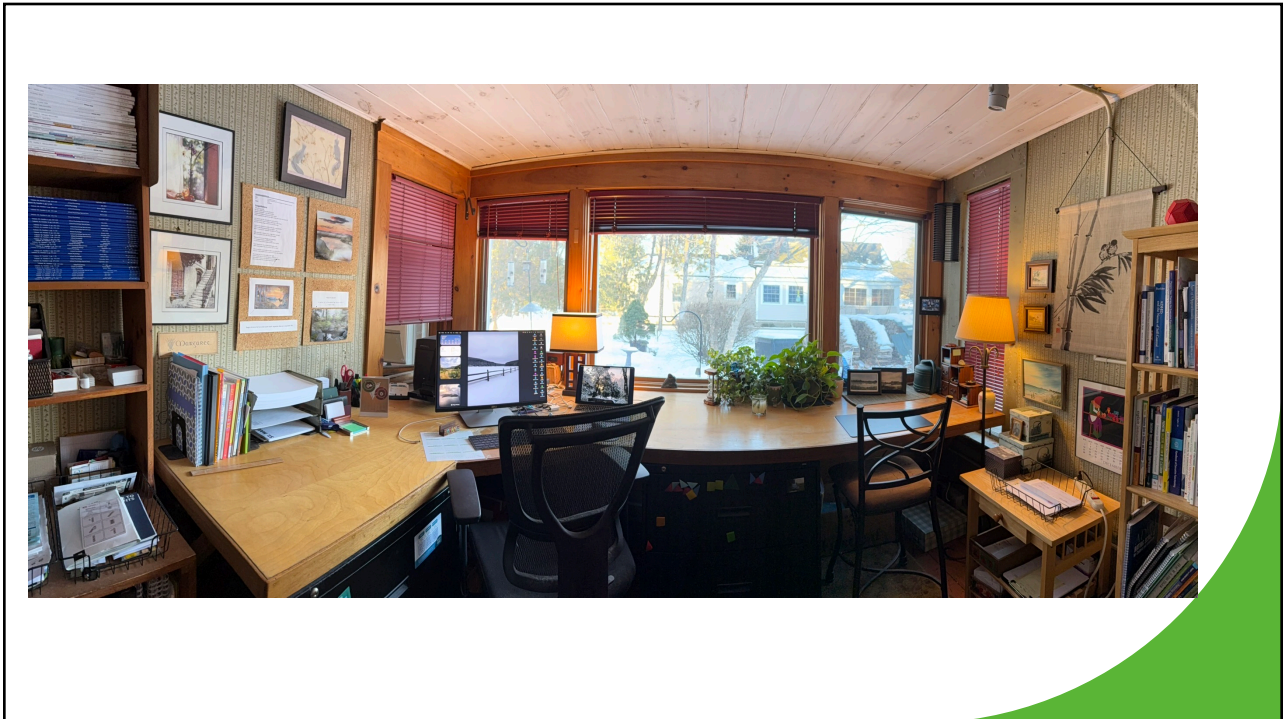


This graph shows that early practice was rewarded with greater increases in automaticity and gains tailed off as participants reached their maximum automaticity for that behaviour.

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REWARD

Source: Wood, Wendy.
2020 Good Habits, Bad
Habits. Farrar, Straus and
Giroux. Kindle Edition.

- “Context will smooth the way. And repetition will jump-start the engine, but if you aren’t getting even a minor reward for your initial effort along the way, you won’t get that habit to start operating on its own.”
- “Rewards have to be experienced right after we do something in order to build habit associations (context-response) in memory.”
- “The most effective habit-building rewards are often intrinsic to a behavior, or a part of the action itself.”

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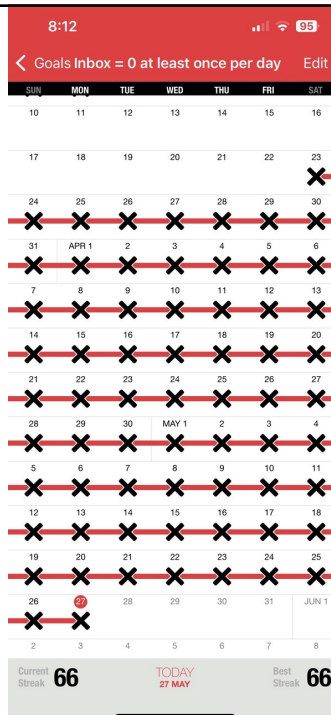
CONSISTENCY

Source: Wood, Wendy. 2020 Good Habits, Bad Habits. Farrar, Straus and Giroux. Kindle Edition.

- "Only by keeping your life as consistent as possible will your habit grow. Otherwise, you can expect it to develop only slowly, like a plant with far too little light."
- "Locations, electronics, people, time. (p. 132). All are important context clues that strengthen habits."
- "This is a crucial point. You can miss a day or two and you will not be set back to zero."

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Tracking app:
Goal Streaks



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SELF-CONTROL VS. CONTEXT

Source: Wood, Wendy.
2020 Good Habits, Bad
Habits. Farrar, Straus and
Giroux. Kindle Edition.

- "Behavior change through self-control...isn't as successful as behavior change through altering contexts."
- "Once in place, the forces in our environment continue to cue us to achieve our goals. "

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The Coaching Process with ADHD Adults

- Meet, review, revise, continue....

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Part VII
Carry out the Plan
and Evaluate Success

Did you follow the plan?

What worked well?

What didn't work so well?

Next step:

Revise plan

Steps to Follow To Complete Goal	Target Completion Date	Done!
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		

Make new smart goal and action plan

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Putting It All Together

Frank came to see a counselor because he was having all kinds of problems with time and task management both at home and at work. He worked for an IT company where he was a project manager. He had specific projects he was charged with managing, but he also had been with the company for awhile and had an array of technical skills that exceeded most of the people who worked at the company...

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Problem Behavior	Executive Skill
Goal Behavior Frank will...	

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Problem Behavior	Executive Skill
Getting sidetracked by requests from colleagues	
Goal Behavior Frank will...	

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Problem Behavior	Executive Skill
Getting sidetracked by requests from colleagues	Planning/prioritizing
Goal Behavior Frank will...	

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Problem Behavior	Executive Skill
Getting sidetracked by requests from colleagues	Planning/prioritizing
Goal Behavior Frank will complete top two priorities on to-do list before responding to requests from co-workers	

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Goal Behavior	
Frank will complete top two priorities on to-do list before responding to requests from co-workers	
Possible Strategies	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Announce plan to co-workers and ask for cooperation • Institute a closed/open-door policy • Allot 1 hour per day to responding to co-workers requests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put off lunch break until first to-do list item is done • Don't leave work until 2nd to-do list item is done

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**The biggest bang for the buck:
Quick and "easy"**

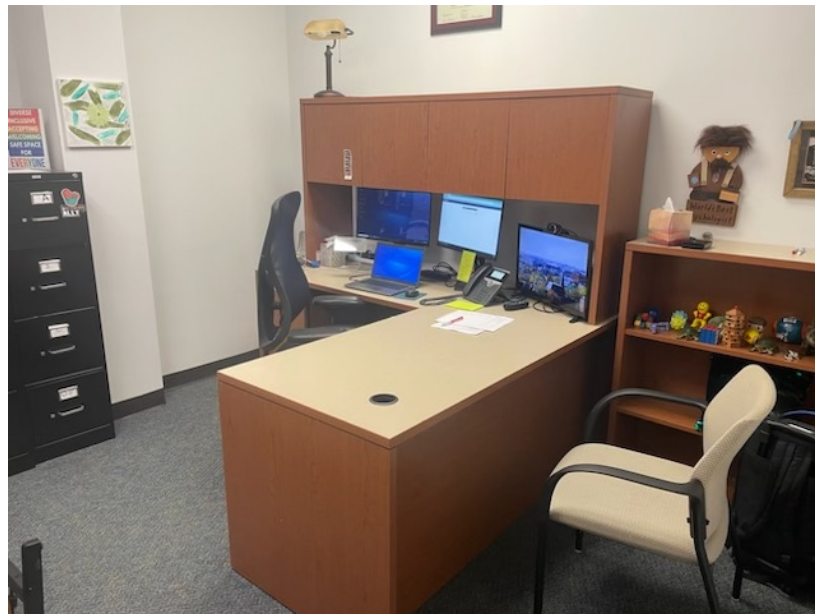
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Peg's Take on the "Perfect" Intervention for Executive Skills

The perfect intervention to support executive skill development is one

- that takes no more than 5-10 minutes a day
- and that you're willing to do forever (or as long as it takes).

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Don't let the long-term goal do all the heavy lifting

- Make the work in the moment more interesting
- Or focus on positive feelings associated with the non-preferred task

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First work then play

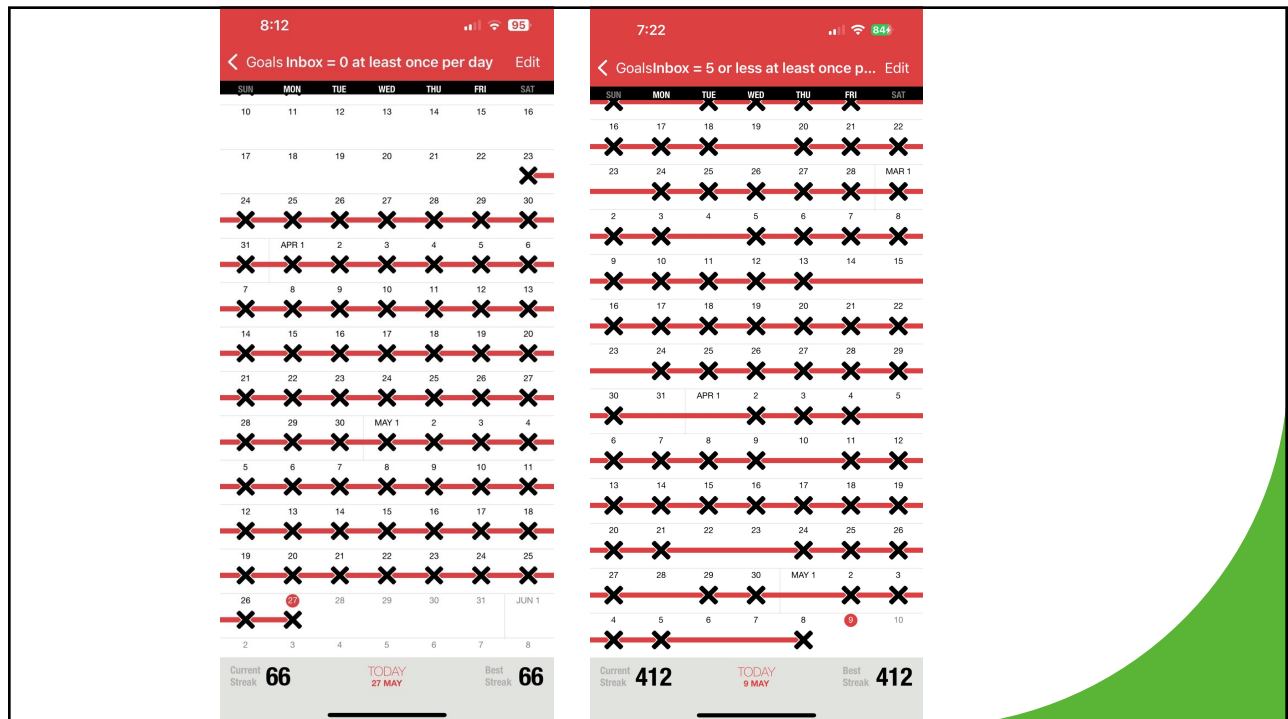
Identify something you really want to do that you're willing to forego until that non-preferred task is finished

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Give yourself "2 free passes"

- If you set as a goal doing something *every day*, allow yourself to skip two days a week.

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Avoid an “all-or-nothing” mentality

- Example: If your goal is to exercise for 30 minutes every day and you don't feel up to it, exercise for 5 minutes rather than skipping exercise altogether.

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Remember...

千里之行, 始於足下

A journey of a thousand miles begins with a
single step

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Additional Resources

https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/aa6ktzl62p9s95o92dc9/AN_SUmJg9CHETbcynIW82nQ?rlkey=a997rkrvnbvi4id2wzx153s2w&st=bqcm3w81&dl=0