

How to Manage your ADHD

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The first and most important task that needs to be addressed once you have been diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD) is coming to terms with your symptoms and the extent to which they interfere with your day-to-day functioning.

Some college students with a history of ADHD have expectations that their “symptoms” will disappear when they make the transition from high school to college. Others are unaware that they have this disability or cluster of symptoms until they reach college. Once transitioned to college, you may begin to struggle academically and/or personally without the assistance of parents to prompt, remind, organize, tutor, prioritize or assist you through feedback to help manage your life.

At the time, it may have appeared to be more annoying or “nagging” than helpful, but the challenge to continue these skills or behaviors on your own may be overwhelming, which can in turn lead you to “underachieve.” Either way, developing compensatory strategies will help you to succeed both academically and personally, and they are a critical component of treatment with or without medication intervention.

Since ADHD can be a lifelong challenge, it is important to develop and practice effective coping strategies early on in your college career.

Like every new skill or habit, it will take time for you to be successful with these changes. However, if you are experiencing ADHD symptoms, it may take much longer to develop these habits consistently.

Strategies that may be helpful include:

- Keeping your expectations for change reasonable
- Addressing several key behaviors that you want to change rather than all of them
- Maintaining a positive attitude about your ability to make change

Consider enlisting a roommate, significant other, family member, academic coach/tutor or a CAPS therapist to assist you as you tackle these challenges.

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Tips for Academic Success

Inside the Classroom...

- Attend classes and come prepared.
- Sit in the front of the class.
- Ask questions and engage in instructor-student interaction.
- Learn note-taking strategies.
- Request a lecture outline from your instructor.
- Use a tape recorder in class.

Outside the Classroom...

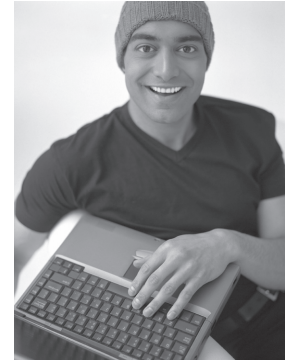
- Keep up with all assigned readings and assignments.
- Purchase books on tape.
- Review written notes or listen to the tape of the lecture as soon as possible after class.
- Team up with others and/or ask the instructor for clarification on topics not well understood, or form a study group.
- Use color, symbols and/or diagrams when reviewing notes.
- Plan study time well in advance and study over time.
- Study in a quiet and clutter-free environment.
- Write, recite and remain active when studying.
- Break down large projects into manageable chunks, each with its own deadline.



General

Considerations...

- Do not overload yourself, consider taking a decreased class load.
- Schedule classes with reasonably lengthy breaks between them, and vary them in subject matter and intensity.
- Plan two hours outside of class for every hour in class when preparing for class, studying or performing class assignments.
- Be aware of academic deadlines.
- Meet with your academic adviser on a biweekly or monthly basis.
- Seek academic support and/or accommodations well in advance.
- Ask for frequent feedback from your instructor.



Tips for Personal Success

Physical Well-Being...

- Eat healthy and maintain an exercise routine.
- Get adequate sleep.
- Do not engage in excessive alcohol and/or drug use.

Emotional Well-Being...

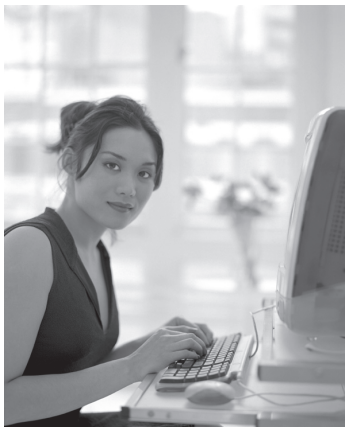
- Maintain a positive attitude and notice your successes more than your failures.
- Learn from your failures, rather than letting them depress or anger you.
- Have a solid and consistent support system.
- Attend psychological/psychiatric counseling on a regular basis.
- Be sure to get treatment for any other underlying psychological issues.
- Participate in activities you enjoy.
- Attend an ADHD support group or start one.

Occupational Well-Being...

- Choose jobs/careers which have a variety of different tasks each day and that allow you to be in charge of yourself and your time, but still have structure, quotas and deadlines.
- Attend vocational/career counseling.
- Seek vocational rehabilitation services in severe cases.

Tips for Overall Success

- Become knowledgeable and comfortable with your disability, so you can advocate for yourself and recognize your limitations.
- Maintain a POSITIVE attitude as you challenge your ineffective habits and develop new skills.
- Use structure and routine in your personal life as well as academics.
- Since ADHD symptoms may result in an individual forgetting or not completing tasks, DO NOT put it off!
- Keep one calendar with all relevant dates, assignments and appointments to structure and organize all academic, occupational and personal activities and responsibilities.
- Set realistic goals, commit to performance and reward yourself when completed.
- Manage your time in a way that is consistent with your goals.
- Take medications as prescribed.
- Think before you speak, and reflect on the feedback others give you.
- Take a realistic inventory of things you are good at and give yourself credit for these strengths!



For additional information regarding ADHD, please refer to the following resources:

- *Driven to Distraction* by E.M. Hollowell, M.D. and J.J. Ratey, M.D.
- *Survival Guide for College Students with ADD and LD* by K. Nadeau
- *ADD and the College Student* by P. Quinn
- *Succeeding in College with Attention Deficit Disorder, Issues, and Strategies for Students, Counselors and Educators* by J. Bramer
- *Hyperactive Children Grown Up* by G. Weiss and L.Y. Hechtman
- *Attention Deficit Disorder in Adults* by L. Weiss
- *The Hyperactive Child, Adolescent and Adult* by P. Wender

Contact Florida Tech's Counseling and Psychological Services at (321) 674-8050 if you would like to meet confidentially with a counselor to assist you in this area. The CAPS Web site at www.fit.edu/caps has a variety of "Academic Success" resources.

Counseling and Psychological Services

CAPS is a counseling facility operated by Florida Institute of Technology's School of Psychology.

Its goals are to promote the best possible academic, vocational and emotional health. Our services are available to students and their immediate families.

Center Hours

Monday–Thursday • 9 a.m.–5 p.m.
Friday • 9 a.m.–4 p.m.

Location

CAPS is located at the intersection of Country Club Road and University Boulevard, west of Babcock Street.

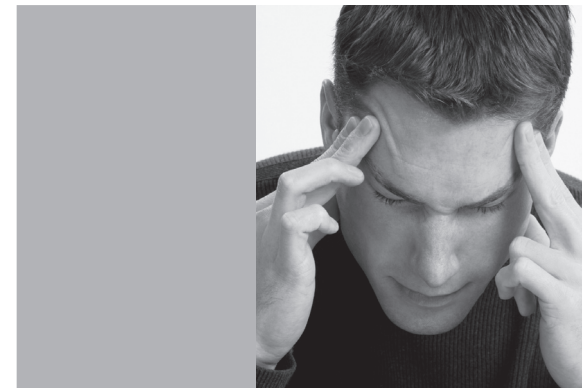
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