

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 life long 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. One strategy that may be helpful is keeping your expectations for change reasonable, addressing several key behaviors that you want to change rather than all of them, and 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.

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 advisor on a biweekly or monthly basis.
 - Seek academic support and/or accommodations well in advance.
 - Ask for frequent feedback from your instructor.

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 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 yourself to be in charge of yourself and your time, but still has structure, quotas, and deadlines.
 - Attend vocational/career counseling.
 - Seek Vocational Rehabilitation Services in severe cases.

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, MD & J.J. Ratey, MD
- * **Survival Guide for College Students with ADD & LD** by K. Nadeau
- * **ADD and the College Students** 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 & 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 & Psychological Services at (321) 674-8050 if you would like to meet confidentially with a counselor to assist you in this area. The CAPS website at <http://www.fit.edu/caps/> has a variety of "Academic Success" resources.