

# Executive Functioning Checklist

*A practical tool for planning, focus, and follow-through*

## What executive functioning is

Executive functions are the brain's management system — the skills that help you plan, start, sustain, and finish. When they're taxed (by stress, ADHD, sleep loss, or burnout), even simple tasks feel heavy. Use this checklist to identify friction points and add supports.

## Planning & prioritizing

- Do I have a single place where all tasks and appointments live?
- Have I identified today's top 1–3 priorities?
- Are big projects broken into next physical actions?
- Have I set realistic time estimates (then doubled them)?

## Task initiation

- Is my "start" step small enough to actually begin?
- Have I removed the biggest friction (open the doc, lay out the clothes)?
- Am I using a timer, body double, or accountability partner?

## Sustained attention

- Are notifications silenced during focus blocks?
- Is my workspace visually calm?
- Have I planned breaks — not just hoped for them?

## Working memory

- Am I writing things down immediately instead of trying to remember?
- Do I have checklists for repeating tasks?
- Is there a visible list of "open loops" I can trust?

## Emotional regulation

- Have I eaten, moved, and slept enough today?
- Am I naming feelings instead of reacting to them?
- Do I pause before responding to frustrating messages?

## Organization

- Does everything I use often have a permanent home?
- Do I do a 5-minute end-of-day reset?
- Am I using calendars, reminders, and lists as external memory?

## **Self-monitoring**

- At the end of the day: what worked, what didn't, what will I adjust tomorrow?
- Am I celebrating small wins, not just noting misses?

## **When to consider evaluation**

If you've tried multiple strategies and still feel like executive functioning is a daily struggle, an evaluation can help identify what's underneath — ADHD, anxiety, depression, sleep issues — and guide next steps.

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