



# How To Make A To-Do Lists

Organization skill training for people with ADHD

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Why: Your ADHD brain is full. Thoughts come and go quickly: To make an effective to do list can help you:

- Clear your mind
- Stay on track
- Avoid forgetting important tasks
- Reduce stress

## What a to-do list can look like

| Short-Term List (Today or This Week)  | Long-Term List (Weeks or Months)   |
|---|--|
| <p>Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pick up prescription</li><li>• Email teacher</li><li>• Take out trash</li></ul> <p>Practice your own list here:</p> | <p>Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Plan birthday party</li><li>• Start learning Spanish</li><li>• Organize garage</li></ul> |

### **Beverly Mental Health Services**

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## Important Tip:

1. **Keep short- and long-term lists separate** so they don't overwhelm you.

2. **Be Specific!**

Don't write:

✗ "Exercise"

Do write:

✓ "Walk 1 mile" or "Do 25 pushups"

3. **Break Big Tasks into Small Steps**

Instead of:

✗ "Clean the kitchen"

Try:

✓ Empty dishwasher

✓ Wipe down counters

✓ Sweep the floor

4. **Cross each item off as you go—it feels great!**

5. **Try Visual Lists** ✍️

Draw instead of write (it helps memory!)

🧹 = Sweep

☎️ = Call dentist

🛒 = Grocery run

Add a label so you know what each picture means.

6. **Make a Brain Dump List**

Keep a running list of everything that pops into your head.

Then:

→ Each morning or night, choose what goes on your daily to-do list.

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## How to Use Your To-Do List

1. When: Before bed or first thing in the morning:  
Make your list. You'll sleep better or start your day focused.

2. Where: To Keep Your List

-  Paper: Great for crossing things off
-  Phone app: Always with you, easy to update
-  Important: Keep your list where you'll see it!

3. Prioritize:

Mark your top 3 tasks:

- 1 ☐ Most important
- 2 ☐ Important
- 3 ☐ Nice to finish

4. Or try the 1-3-5 Method: based on the difficulty rating scales:

- 1 Big task
- 3 Medium tasks
- 5 Small tasks

## What If You Don't Finish?

If a task keeps showing up again and again:

😞 Ask yourself:

- Is it too big? → Break it down
- Am I avoiding it? → Give yourself a reward for finishing
- Is it still important? → If not, cross it off

## Having Trouble Staying on Track?

- Set reminders
- Use timers
- Ask a friend to check in
- Talk to your doctor if your meds need adjusting

Organization is a skill—and like any skill, it gets easier with practice!

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