



How to Create Time Management Schedules for Teens with ADHD during the COVID-19 Outbreak

The COVID-19 outbreak has upended family life around the world. School closures, working remotely, physical distancing — it's a lot to navigate for anyone, but especially for teenagers with ADHD. The information that follows is intended to help teens understand the basics of prioritizing what is important and how to create an organization schedule that will help manage their time effectively.

Good time management involves:

- Prioritizing what's most important over what's less important and can wait.
- Selecting needs over wants, especially with leisure time. Consider fun things like video games, Netflix, and TikTok as you would a dessert, and consume them only after you've finished what needs to be done
- Meeting multiple deadlines by accurately estimating and setting aside enough time to complete a task.
- Knowing where you're supposed to be at a given moment, and allowing enough time to get there. Careful scheduling makes you look like you have your stuff together.
- Keeping complicated projects in step-by-step order. Breakdown tasks down into doable steps, and schedule each into a list or calendar.
- Creating an organizational system involves prioritizing a few events you should schedule every day:
- Sleep. Use your electronic calendar on your phone, tablet or computer to schedule the sleep you need. You can also track your weekly sleep schedule on your phone.
- Waking Up. Mornings can be difficult for teens with ADHD, even with good sleep habits. Try taking your stimulant before you get out of bed, and think about buying an annoying alarm clock that won't shut off until you perform a certain task.
- Procrastination. Create artificial deadlines in advance of the real ones, leaving enough time to procrastinate before the actual date, so you'll be covered if anything goes wrong.
- Private Time. You need time to decompress, meditate, and refocus — especially if you also have sensory challenges. Schedule downtime into your day.
- Your Passions. Schedule events and things you love to do. Find new ways to "meet" friends, for example using video chats. This also serves to limit your time on, say, gaming or watching movies, to what you can really afford to devote to those activities.

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How to build an organization schedule:

- Write down a schedule that fits your routine and tasks to accomplish (e.g., morning, afternoon, dinner, work, weekend, evening) Post the steps of your routine where you can see them. (You can use an electronic calendar like Google Calendar, your phone, Excel document or write it down on a piece of paper).
- Set a watch or phone alert to go off five minutes before you're scheduled to begin a new task. That will give you time to finish whatever you are working on, and refocus.
- Start small. If creating a whole new life routine at once feels like too much, pick one small thing – like making the bed or doing laundry. When you consistently do this for two weeks, add another tiny thing. Before you know it, your larger routine will change.
- Set a day to start over. If you fall off on your routine because of vacation, a houseguest, or an unexpected event like an illness, mark a day on the calendar when you'll pick up where you left off.
- Don't give up. If you have a hard time with a part of your routine, try doing it a different way. More often than not, just a tiny tweak can make a difference.

Academics

The ministry of Education in Ontario is recommending elementary students spend between five and 10 hours on learning per week, depending on their age. High school students, it says, should spend three hours per course per week if they're on a semestered system, or half of that if their schedule isn't split into semesters. Please refer to your local school board and provincial Ministry of Education for recommended learning hours per week for students.

You will thrive when you stick to daily routines and schedules. Set up reliable routines for the different aspects of your life – getting ready for school, doing homework, getting to bed on time – and you'll free up important time to enjoy the rest of your day, without feeling guilty about putting off an assignment or missing an appointment.

Articles on Creating Schedules

<https://www.additudemag.com/time-management-for-teens/>

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<https://www.unicef.org/media/66146/file/COVID-19%20parenting%20tips.pdf>

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<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/life/parenting/article-coronavirus-kids-home-ideas-occupied-entertained-march-break-schools/>

<https://www.mother.ly/news/coronavirus-family-schedule->

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COVID-19 Quarantine

A Daily Sample Schedule for Teens

Time		
Morning		Good morning! Time to get up, shower, get dressed
		Breakfast Something healthy, clear dishes, brush afterwards
		Morning exercise Go for a jog/walk, yoga
		Academic Time Electronics only if required for schoolwork. No video games!
		Creative Time Drawing, music, writing

Time		
Afternoon		Lunch Something healthy, clear dishes
		Free time Enjoy one of your favourite activities for a while
		Academic Time Review the day's work and prepare for tomorrow
		Fresh Air Bike ride, walk the dog, play outside

Time		
Evening		Dinner Help with preparations, clear/wash the dishes afterwards
		Relaxation Time TV, video games, read, music, chat with friends
		Good night! Wash up, prepare for the morning, read

Provided by CADDRA - Canadian ADHD Resource Alliance

