ADHD SCREENING

The ADHD Morning Routine Guide

Practical, low-friction strategies for smoother mornings

A free resource from adhd-screening.co.uk

Mornings are often the hardest part of the day with ADHD — not because of laziness, but because getting from asleep to out-the-door involves exactly the things ADHD makes harder: starting a task without a clear trigger, holding a sequence of steps in mind, and managing time that doesn't always feel like it's passing.

The strategies below won't fix that overnight, but they consistently help — and you don't need all seven to feel the difference. Pick two or three and try them for a week before judging whether they're working.

1. Do tonight what you won't want to decide in the morning

Decision-making is harder first thing. Lay out clothes, pack your bag, and decide what's for breakfast the night before — not because you're incapable of deciding in the morning, but because removing decisions removes friction exactly where you have the least capacity for it.

2. One visible checklist, not a mental one

Write your morning steps down somewhere you'll actually see — a card by the kettle, a note on the mirror — rather than relying on remembering the order. ADHD specifically affects working memory, so a visible list isn't a crutch; it's just a more reliable memory than the one in your head. (There's a template for this on the last page.)

3. Keep your phone out of the first twenty minutes

Checking your phone first thing is one of the easiest ways to lose a morning before it starts — a quick glance becomes twenty minutes you don't remember agreeing to. Charge it outside the bedroom, or at least somewhere that isn't the first thing your hand reaches for.

4. Use a visible timer, not a hidden clock

A loss of accurate “felt” time is common with ADHD, which is why a phone clock you have to unlock to check doesn't help much. A visible countdown timer — even a cheap kitchen one — keeps time present in the room instead of something you have to remember to check.

5. Anchor new habits to ones you already do

A new habit is far more likely to stick when it's attached to something you already do without thinking — “after I brush my teeth, I take my tablets” works better than a habit that's meant to happen “at some point in the morning.” Pick one existing anchor and build outward from there.

6. Borrow someone else's presence

Getting ready alongside someone else — a flatmate, a partner, even a video call with a friend doing their own morning routine — often makes starting easier, the same way body doubling helps with other tasks. You don't need their help directly; their presence alone tends to be enough.

7. A messy system you actually use beats a perfect one you don't

If a strategy here doesn't stick exactly as written, adapt it rather than abandon it. The goal isn't a perfect morning routine — it's a morning that's a little more predictable than it was last week.

A closing thought

If you've tried strategies like these before and mornings are still a real struggle — not just inconvenient, but genuinely hard in a way that affects your work, relationships or how you feel about yourself — that's worth taking seriously.

Our free, confidential ADHD screening takes about ten minutes and might help make sense of why. It isn't a diagnosis — just a starting point.

Start your free screening at adhd-screening.co.uk

This guide offers general, practical strategies and isn't medical advice or a substitute for a professional assessment.

Your Morning Checklist

Print this page, or copy it onto a card by the kettle — write your own steps on the blank lines below. Two examples are filled in to show the idea.

[x] Lay out clothes and bag

example — replace with your own

[x] Phone stays outside the bedroom

example — replace with your own

[ ] _____

[ ] _____

[ ] _____

[ ] _____

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