

# Build a Routine That Lasts

The average ADHD routine collapses around week four, when novelty wears off and automaticity hasn't kicked in yet. This worksheet builds the version that survives. Start stupidly small. Expand later.

## Three rules before you start

1. Anchor new routines to **events**, not clock times. "After coffee" beats "at 7:15 AM" for ADHD brains.
2. Start at the **minimum viable version**. Five minutes, not 45. You earn the right to expand.
3. Aim for 80 per cent adherence, not 100. One missed day is a glitch, not a failure.

## 1. What's your anchor?

Something you already do every single day without thinking. Coffee, shower, arriving at your desk, picking up the kids.

## 2. What's your stupidly small first step?

So small it's embarrassing. "Put on running shoes" (not "run 5 km"). "Open the document" (not "write the report").

## 3. The stack

Write your anchor, then your first step. Keep it to three links max. Longer chains break under stress.

ANCHOR

“

STEP 1

“

STEP 2

“

STEP 3

## 4. Your one-sentence why

When motivation dies (it will), this is what you read. Specific. Values-based. "So I can be present with the kids after work" beats "so I'm healthier."

NOVELTY ROTATION

ADHD brains are wired for novelty. Define the **goal** of the routine (e.g., “activate energy”), then list two or three ways to meet that goal. Rotate daily or weekly. Structure stays. Novelty stays.

The goal of this routine is to...

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<p>OPTION A</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p>OPTION B</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p>OPTION C</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
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RESTART PROTOCOL

You will miss days. Plan for it so you don't spiral. Expect two to three restarts before a routine sticks. That's normal for ADHD brains, not failure.

- 1 Notice without judging. “I missed three days.” Not “I'm a failure.” The story makes the restart harder than the missing.
- 2 Read your one-sentence why (page 1). Touch the visual cue (clothes by the bed, mat by the desk). Do the minimum version once, today. Not tomorrow.
- 3 After three days back in the rhythm, ask: what broke it? Something design-fixable, or a life event? Fix the fixable. Accept the rest.

REFLECTION · WHAT BROKE IT LAST TIME?

Your last routine that fell apart. What specifically stopped it? Novelty cliff? One disruption? Too many steps? Wrong anchor? Knowing this helps you design a version that survives the same thing next time.

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