

ten keys to conquering AD/HD in the office

by Sandy Maynard

If you're ready to climb the corporate ladder but feel like someone tore the steps to success out of your company handbook, don't worry. Women (and men) with AD/HD often encounter procrastination, communication and organization problems both professionally and personally, but that doesn't have to mean you're doomed to entry-level. Here's a memo of the problems AD/HD can cause women at work, and the top ten ways you can conquer them:

1 communicate clearly

Ask questions to understand your assignment fully. Repeat back directions that you are given to assure you have heard them correctly. Ask for specific deadlines, so you know that what is being asked is really doable. If not, address the issue immediately. Do not wait until it is too late and you are forced to bring work home.

2 get a handle on procrastination

Don't let perfectionism thwart your ability to get things done. Ask yourself how you can make it quick and simple, like bulleting items in memos, calling instead of emailing, or even hitting the delete key on the computer.

3 limit the length of phone conversations

Time can fly when we're on the phone. A call that should take only five minutes can easily turn into 45. Preface each call with a time limit by starting out with, "Hi Thomas. I only have 5 minutes, but I thought I would give you a quick call to let you know..." The person on the other end will most likely respond appropriately by making their comments short and to the point.

4 use just one time management system

Use one time management system. Use it for work and outside work appointments. Choose one convenient location at work and one at home to put your planner or



Photo by Les Campbell

palm, so you always know where it is. View this location as just as important as the key hook for your keys. You do have a key hook, don't you?

5 check your agenda

Check your agenda several times a day. All busy women need to do this. Set a timer if you think you might get too engrossed in an activity and forget to go to a scheduled meeting. Make it a habit to check your schedule each and every time you get a cup of coffee, take out the garbage or collect the mail. Habits won't form without consistency and frequency.

6 professional development

Pick one professional/social skill to improve upon twice a year. For example, being a good conversationalist can be learned, but it takes practice. So practice giving others a chance to respond and wait for others to finish before reacting. Most of all, ask a trusted friend what areas they think you need to improve on to become more professional and socially adept.

7 delegation

Decide what others can do for you and let them do it. Moving ahead often means mastering the fine art of delegating. Draw up lists of things others can do to help you move

things along, and things you need to do yourself. This works well at home, too.

8 keep your private life private

Don't broadcast your personal business at your place of business, or let excessive family responsibilities and phone calls make a bad impression with your boss.

9 let your work stay at work

Likewise, leave your work worries at your desk when you clock out for the day. All your responsibilities will still be there tomorrow morning, and you may even feel like doing them once you get a chance to spend time on what's important to you outside of work.

10 let your personal health come first

Let your mental and physical health come first. Find work that is meaningful for you personally and watch the weekdays fly by.

Can't cut the dullness or stress from your job environment? Nourish yourself at home with hobbies you enjoy. Take time for yourself whenever possible, using the weekends to rejuvenate your spirit – and don't forget to use those vacation days! ■