ADHD Cleaning Planner

ADHD: Cleaning One Small Step at a Time

This ADHD cleaning planner breaks cleaning into small steps, room by room, and keeps the plan where you can see it. ADHD researcher Russell Barkley advises putting plans, reminders, and time outside your head, at the place where you need them. Steven Safren and colleagues teach adults with ADHD to break tasks into small steps and to work in chunks that fit their attention span. This planner uses both ideas for cleaning.

1 Before you start

- **Time your focus.** The next time you do a dull chore, notice how many minutes pass before your mind wanders. Plan your cleaning in chunks about that long.
- **Use a timer.** Set it for one chunk, clean until it rings, then take a short break.
- **Keep this sheet in sight.** Put it on the fridge or by the door of the room you are cleaning, so the next step is always in front of you.
- **Plan a small reward.** Choose something you enjoy, like a favorite song or a snack, for right after each session.

My focus chunk is about this many minutes:

Why does this work? *ADHD can make it harder to keep a plan in mind and to keep going on tasks that feel boring. A written list of small steps, kept where you can see it, does some of that remembering for you. A timer makes time easy to see, and a reward right after the task gives you a reason to start now.*

2 Room-by-room steps

Keep each step small enough to finish in one focus chunk. Add your own rooms and steps, and tick each one when it is done.

Room	Small step	Done
Kitchen	*Clear and wipe one counter*	
Bathroom	*Wipe the sink and the mirror*	

**This worksheet provides information but is not a substitute for therapy. It works best with guidance from a professional.*

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3 My cleaning week

Pick one or two small steps for each day. A little most days usually works better than one big clean that never starts.

Day	Room and step	Minutes	Done
Mon	*Kitchen: clear and wipe one counter*	*10*	

4 When a day goes wrong

If I skip a day, I will restart with this one easy step:

Example: Put five things away, then stop.

My reward after each cleaning session:

5 Look back after a week

What worked, and what will you change next week?

Messy weeks happen to everyone. If clutter and chores feel impossible to keep up with, a therapist who works with adult ADHD can help you build a system that fits you.

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