My sensory toolkit

A printable pack for ADHD and AuDHD brains, to help you notice what your senses need.

What's inside

- My senses map: what is too much, and what helps
- My overload signs, from green to red
- My calm-down kit checklist
- My daily sensory menu
- Quick one-minute resets
- A "how to help me" sheet to share

Many ADHD and AuDHD brains feel the world more strongly. Noise, lights, labels and crowds can fill you up fast. This toolkit helps you spot what your senses need, so you can look after them before you reach overload.

Free from theadhdvibe.com

My senses map

For each sense, write what feels like too much, and what helps you feel good. There are no wrong answers.

Sight

lights, screens, busy rooms

Too much:

Helps me:

Sound

noise, voices, music

Too much:

Helps me:

Touch

clothes, labels, hugs

Too much:

Helps me:

Taste and texture

food and drinks

Too much:

Helps me:

Smell

perfume, cooking, cleaning

Too much:

Helps me:

Movement

swinging, spinning, travel

Too much:

Helps me:

Body pressure

tight hugs, heavy blankets

Too much:

Helps me:

Inside my body

hunger, thirst, hot or cold

Too much:

Helps me:

My overload signs

Overload usually builds up in stages. Spotting the early signs gives you time to do something about it.

Green: I feel OK

What I notice

e.g. calm, can chat, can think

What helps

e.g. keep doing what works

Amber: I'm getting full

What I notice

e.g. snappy, fidgety, it all feels loud

What helps

e.g. headphones in, a short break

Red: I'm overloaded

What I notice

e.g. can't talk, need to get out

What helps

e.g. a quiet room, no questions

My calm-down kit

Tick what you already have, and add your own. Keep a small kit in your bag, and a bigger one at home.

For my ears

- ☐ Noise-cancelling headphones
- ☐ Earplugs
- ☐ A calm playlist
- ☐ _____

For my eyes

- ☐ Sunglasses
- ☐ A cap or hood
- ☐ An eye mask
- ☐ _____

For my hands

- ☐ A fidget toy
- ☐ Putty or a stress ball
- ☐ A smooth stone
- ☐ _____

For my mouth

- ☐ Chewy or crunchy snacks
- ☐ Chewing gum
- ☐ A cold drink with a straw
- ☐ _____

For my body

- ☐ A soft hoodie
- ☐ A heavy blanket or lap pad
- ☐ Comfy socks
- ☐ _____

For my nose

- ☐ A favourite hand cream
- ☐ A scent I like
- ☐ Lip balm
- ☐ _____

Where I keep my kit: _____

I will check and top it up on: _____

Tip: a pencil case or make-up bag works well. It does not need to be fancy, it just needs to be with you.

My daily sensory menu

Little things through the day that keep your battery topped up. Pick a few from the list, or use your own.

Ideas to pick from

- A walk outside
- Wall push-ups
- Stretching
- Bouncing or dancing
- Carrying something heavy
- A warm shower
- Wrapping up in a blanket
- A crunchy snack
- Humming or singing
- Dimming the lights

Morning

to wake my body up

Afternoon

to reset in the middle of the day

Evening

to wind down

Before something big

to fill my battery first

Quick resets

Try one when you feel yourself getting full. Each one takes about a minute.

1 Cold water

Run your wrists under cold water, or hold something cold. It can help bring you back to now.

2 Push and squeeze

Push your palms together hard for 10 seconds, or push against a wall. Then let go.

3 Cut the input

Headphones on, eyes closed, or face a wall. Less to take in for a minute.

4 Hum or breathe out slowly

A long, low hum, or breathe in for 4 and out for 6. The long out-breath does the calming.

5 Wrap up

A hoodie, a blanket, or a tight hug from someone safe. Pressure can feel really steadying.

My favourite reset is: _____

Struggling or not safe? Call 999 in an emergency. Samaritans: 116 123, free, any time. Under 19? Childline: 0800 1111. Or text SHOUT to 85258.

How to help me

Fill this in when you feel calm. Then share a copy with family, friends, school or work.

My name: _____

When I'm overloaded, it can look like

e.g. going quiet, getting snappy, covering my ears

Please do

e.g. give me space, talk less, let me leave

Please don't

e.g. touch me without asking, ask lots of questions

Things that help me

e.g. a quiet room, my headphones, a cold drink

Want more? Try Vibe Check.

The free app from The ADHD Vibe. It changes to match how you feel, with tools for every kind of ADHD day.

- Pick your vibe, get one thing that helps
- Help button on every screen for hard moments
- Find my words, wins jar, trigger list and more
- AuDHD calm mode, and hide what you don't need
- Private: everything stays on your device

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Your sensory needs are real. Meeting them is looking after yourself, not being difficult.

The ADHD Vibe shares things that help many people. It is a wellbeing guide, not medical advice. If you are struggling, please talk to your GP.

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