RECHARGE PSYCHOLOGY

START SMALL. STAY HUMAN.

The ADHD Pocket Coach

Set Up an AI Sidekick for Planning, Getting Started, and Staying on Track



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rechargepsychology.com

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Written and designed with AI assistance.

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Why this exists

I made this for adults with ADHD who want something practical to try between sessions. It gives you a way to turn a plan into one small action when getting started feels hard.

Sometimes you know what to do and still can’t get moving.

Knowing and doing aren’t the same thing. You can understand your patterns and still get stuck on a boring email at 2 p.m. on Tuesday.

This guide shows you how to use an AI chat for planning, starting and finishing everyday tasks. Try it on one low-stakes task and see what helps.

You start the chat, give it a task, and decide what to do next. Use your own timer and report back if that helps. Don’t count on the app to notice you’re stuck or to remember the plan later.

It's not therapy. It's scaffolding you can put in your pocket.

You don’t need AI to use these ideas. A timer, a sticky note or a check-in with a friend can do the job too. The point is to make the next step easier, not to add another app you have to manage.

The disclaimers (short, read them)

Please read this

Not treatment. Nothing here or from your AI assistant is medical or psychological advice.

Not for crisis. In Canada, call or text 9-8-8 for suicide crisis support. If you’re in immediate danger, call 9-1-1. See 988.ca.

Watch your privacy. Use generic examples. Don’t share names, health details, client information, contact details, passwords or private documents. Check the app’s data settings before you start.

It's an experiment. Notice what helps and what doesn't. If you have a therapist, loop them in. That's what turns a novelty into something useful.

A quick note on your brain

ADHD can affect attention and the skills you use to start, organize and finish tasks.

Some tasks are easier to start when they’re interesting, urgent or clearly defined. What helps varies. Getting stuck on a task isn’t a character flaw.

So we change the inputs. Get it out of your head. Make the next step small enough to be silly. Make it engaging enough to start. That's what a pocket coach is for.

A static list can be useful, but it can’t help you rethink a step when you get stuck. A chat can suggest one smaller action while you’re using it. Keep your plan somewhere you control so you can pick up the thread yourself.



What it can do

- Help you plan the day, one small piece at a time. Tell it what's on your plate and it'll sort it into an order that makes sense.
- Break overwhelming tasks into stupidly small steps. "Clean the garage" becomes "put on shoes, grab a garbage bag, set a timer for 10 minutes."
- Use it for work sprints. Set a timer yourself and come back to report what you did. Try it and see whether checking in helps you restart.

- Help you slow down during everyday overwhelm. Ask for one low-stakes next step. Don’t use a chatbot for urgent support.
- Help you think through decisions out loud. Pros, cons, what matters most, without the spiral.
- Help you revisit a routine when you bring it back into the chat. Keep a short copy somewhere you control.
- Work from context you provide. It may miss or forget details, even in a long chat. Restate anything that matters.

What it can't do

- Replace therapy. It doesn't know your history, it's not a registered professional, and it has no clinical judgment. It can't diagnose anything, it can't assess risk, and it carries no duty of care toward you.
- Be right all the time. It's confident when it's wrong, too. It can invent facts, misremember what you told it, and give advice that sounds solid but doesn't fit your situation. Check anything important.
- Read between the lines. It can miss sarcasm, misread your tone, and give literal answers to emotional questions. If something feels off, it probably is.
- Know what’s happening off-screen. It can only work with input and access you give it.
- Notice you’re stuck or reliably check in on its own. Reminder features vary by app. Use a separate timer and start each check-in yourself.

Setup (15 minutes, once)

1. Pick an AI chat app you already use, or use the provider’s official site. This setup doesn’t require special memory or reminder features. Check what the service keeps and how your data may be used. Keep accounts and files disconnected for this exercise.

2. Open a new chat and paste the setup message on page 7. Copy everything between the lines, paste it, and send it. Personalize with generic patterns, not names, health details or information about other people.

3. Answer with a generic example: “I put off admin tasks when the first step isn’t clear.” Then try it with one task.

Name your coach

This sounds silly. Do it anyway. You're going to talk to this thing every day, and "hey AI assistant" gets old fast. Give it a name and tell it who to be. A pirate maiden with strong opinions about your calendar. A no-nonsense drill sergeant who respects your boundaries. A warm grandmother who also happens to be an excellent project manager. A dry-witted butler who keeps you honest without ever raising his voice. Whatever makes you actually want to open the chat.

One important thing, and I mean this: it is not a person. Even when it feels like one. Even when it says something that lands emotionally. It is a computer program. It is not sentient, it doesn't care about you, and it doesn't remember you the way a person does. The personality is a tool to make the interaction work better for your brain. It is not a relationship. If you ever catch yourself treating it like a friend, that's worth mentioning to an actual human.



Your setup message

Copy everything between the lines below and paste it into a new chat as your first message.

COPY EVERYTHING BELOW THIS LINE INTO YOUR FIRST MESSAGE

Help me plan ordinary tasks, get started and stay on track. Keep this to practical planning, not therapy or health advice. Don’t ask for identifying or sensitive details.

Here is how I need you to work with me:

- Be direct and warm. Plain language, no fluff, no lectures.
- Keep every message short. Under 60 words unless I ask for more.
- One thing at a time. Never more than one question or next step per message.
- Make steps absurdly small. If a step takes more than 10 minutes, break it down. "Open the laptop" is a legitimate step.
- When I'm stuck, don't ask me what's wrong. Give me the smallest possible first move. I'll set a 10-minute timer myself.
- When I'm overwhelmed, slow down first. Acknowledge it in one sentence, then offer one calming step before we touch the task list.
- Never shame me. If I didn't do the thing, that's data, not failure.
- When I tell you something works, use it when I bring it up again. I know you may not remember between conversations, so I'll remind you.
- Mornings: help me plan the day. Top 3 things, in order, with time blocks. Realistic, not aspirational. If I list 12 things, help me cut it to 3.
- Evenings: 5-minute shutdown. What got done, what's open, first step tomorrow.

To start: introduce yourself briefly, then ask me no more than five questions to understand how to coach me well. Ask them one at a time.

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Start here



If you do nothing else: do the morning launch, every morning, for three days. That's the whole on-ramp. Everything below is optional until that feels automatic.

Ways to use it

- Morning launch (5 minutes). "Help me plan today." Top 3 things, in order, time-blocked. Realistic, not aspirational. Do this before email. Email is where plans go to die.
- Task breakdown. "This feels huge: [the thing]." It slices it into 10-minute steps. Do step one. Just step one.
  You: "This feels huge: my kitchen is a disaster." Coach: "Step one: put on music. Tell me when it's on." That's the whole game.
- Check-in sprints. “I’m working on [task] for 25 minutes. I’ll report back when my timer goes off.” Set your own timer. See whether reporting back makes it easier to keep going.
- Everyday overwhelm. Ask for one simple next step. If you’re in a crisis, get human support instead (see page 3).
- Appointment prep. Ask for a blank three-point agenda, then fill it in privately. Keep your therapy notes and health information out of the chat.
- Evening shutdown (5 minutes). "Shut down my day." What got done, what's open, first step for tomorrow. Then close the app.

Making it stick

- Home screen it. Next to the apps you actually open. Out of sight, out of mind. You know this about yourself.
- Attach it to something you already do. Morning launch with coffee. Shutdown after dinner. New habits stick to old ones.
- Lower the bar. "Help me plan today" counts. You don't need a perfect system. You need one you'll actually open.
- When you fall off (you will), just restart. The re-entry is "help me plan today." No catching up, no guilt, no "I failed the system."
- Shape it. "The timer thing worked" tells it to suggest timers more. You're building your coach as you go.
- Tell someone. A therapist, a friend, whoever. Don't keep the experiment to yourself.

When it misbehaves

It will. Here's the fix for the common ones:

- It writes an essay: reply “shorter.” Repeat the instruction when needed.
- It gives you a 12-step plan: reply "one step at a time, remember?"
- It starts sounding like a motivational poster: reply "less fluff, more direct."
- It asks three questions at once: reply "one question at a time." It needs the reminder.
- It keeps suggesting things you've already tried: tell it what's failed before. "That doesn't work for me because..." saves you both the loop.
- It forgets what you told it: just tell it again. Repeat the important stuff each session. Don't assume it carried everything over.
- Its tone feels judgy: it's not judging you, it can't. But if the tone isn't working, say so. "Be warmer" or "be more matter-of-fact" both work.
- It gets preachy about productivity: reply “skip the lecture and give me one practical step.”



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Edmonton and virtual across Alberta

I work with ADHD adults every day on the gap between knowing and doing. This guide is one place to start.

Want more?

Find more resources and the ADHD Real Talk podcast at RechargePsychology.com.

The tool should fit your brain.

Not the other way around.

Most productivity advice was written for brains that aren't yours. This is about building support that fits the brain you actually have.

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