

Before you take an ADHD self-test

A short guide to help you answer the Adult ADHD Self-Report Scale (ASRS-v1.1) with real-life examples in mind.

What is the ASRS?

The Adult ADHD Self-Report Scale (ASRS-v1.1) is a symptom checklist developed in conjunction with the World Health Organization. The short screener uses six questions to explore common adult ADHD experiences.

It is a screening tool, not a diagnosis. A result can help you decide whether it would be useful to speak with a suitably qualified healthcare professional.

Why can the questions be surprisingly hard to answer?

The wording is necessarily brief, but everyday life is not. ADHD patterns can become tangled up with habits, coping strategies, routines and systems you have built over many years. You may read a question and initially think, “No, I’m fine with that” - because you have found a way to compensate for the difficulty.

Before you start

Think beyond today. Consider different stages of your life - school, university, work, relationships and family life.

Notice the workaround. Calendars, alarms, reminders from other people or doing something only at the last minute may all be ways you manage a difficulty.

Look for patterns. One isolated example matters less than something that happens repeatedly or across different settings.

Borrow another perspective. Think about what partners, family, friends or colleagues have noticed over the years.

The first six questions broadly look at

Finishing	Wrapping up tasks and following through
Organisation	Getting things in order and knowing where to start
Remembering	Appointments, plans and commitments
Starting	Avoiding or delaying mentally demanding tasks
Movement	Physical restlessness and the need to move
Activity	Feeling driven to stay busy or active

Three questions, translated into everyday life

These examples are not extra diagnostic criteria. They are prompts to help you think about what the questionnaire may look like in ordinary adult life.

QUESTION 1	How often do you have trouble wrapping up the final details of a project once the challenging parts have been done?
What is this about?	What happens when a task moves from interesting or stimulating to repetitive, administrative or detail-focused.
Why is it asking this?	Some adults can start strongly but find that motivation or interest drops when the remaining work involves checking details, editing, paperwork, routine follow-through or sustained effort.
Everyday examples	• Researching a holiday for hours but not actually booking it. • Enjoying the creative part of a project but struggling with editing or final submission. • Starting home jobs enthusiastically but leaving several 'almost finished'.
QUESTION 2	How often do you have difficulty getting things in order when you have to do a task that requires organisation?
What is this about?	How easy it is to turn an idea, goal or responsibility into a clear sequence of actions.
Why is it asking this?	The difficulty may not be understanding what needs doing. It can be working out where to begin, what order to do things in, how long each part will take, or how to keep track of several moving pieces.
Everyday examples	• Knowing what needs doing but feeling stuck at the starting point. • Making several lists but still not knowing which task comes first. • Beginning multiple parts of a job at once and losing the overall sequence.
QUESTION 3	How often do you have problems remembering appointments or obligations?
What is this about?	How reliably future plans, commitments and responsibilities stay available in your mind.
Why is it asking this?	Many adults remember appointments because they have built strong external memory systems. The useful question is not only whether you remembered, but how much support was needed to remember.
Everyday examples	• Remembering the dentist because your phone reminded you three times. • Finding an unpaid bill after a late-payment reminder arrives. • Realising days later that you never replied to a message. • Promising to call someone back and remembering only when they contact you again.

Keep in mind

Try not to answer according to the person you think you *should* be. Think about the pattern that is actually there, including the effort, reminders and systems required to keep things on track. **A self-test can point towards a conversation; it cannot tell you on its own whether you have ADHD.**