

Executive Function: Your Brain's Management System

The mental skills that plan, focus, remember, and self-regulate, and a simple support for each. Educational overview.

Executive function is the set of mental skills that let you plan, focus, hold information in mind, resist impulses, and manage yourself toward a goal. It is not about intelligence or effort. It dips with stress, poor sleep, and fatigue, and it can be supported by changing the task and the environment, not just trying harder.

Skill	What it does	A support that helps
Working memory	Holds information in mind while you use it.	Write it down, and cut the number of steps.
Inhibition	Pauses the impulse before you act.	Add friction to the habit, and remove the cue.
Cognitive flexibility	Shifts between tasks and points of view.	Do one thing at a time, and plan the transitions.
Planning	Sequences steps toward a goal.	Break it down, and name only the next action.
Task initiation	Gets you started.	Shrink the first step, and set a clear start cue.
Self-regulation	Manages feelings under load.	Name the feeling, slow the breath, then continue.

If executive skills are a persistent struggle across settings, it is worth an evaluation. Conditions like ADHD are treatable, and the right supports make a real difference.

Learn more: [Executive Function at shrinkdaily.com/concept/executive-function](https://shrinkdaily.com/concept/executive-function)