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THE THINGS NOBODY TAUGHT ME

A disability-friendly guide to everyday adult life, practical systems and the unwritten rules people often assume everyone knows

NEW DISABILITY WORKBOOK SERIES - BOOK 15

This workbook belongs to:

Adult life contains a surprising number of invisible instructions. This workbook makes some of them visible, while recognising that disability can change how much energy, support, accessibility or preparation a task needs.

Welcome

You are not expected to know everything already. Practical adulthood is mostly a collection of systems that can be learned, adapted, shared or supported.

An everyday adult-life thing I wish somebody had explained clearly:

1. My Adult-Life Dashboard

See which areas feel comfortable and which need clearer systems.

Area	Fine	Need a system	Want support
Appointments	☐	☐	☐
Money / bills	☐	☐	☐
Food	☐	☐	☐
Shopping	☐	☐	☐
Laundry	☐	☐	☐
Cleaning	☐	☐	☐
Travel	☐	☐	☐
Messages / calls	☐	☐	☐
Paperwork	☐	☐	☐

2. The Art of the Checklist

A checklist is not cheating. It moves memory out of your head and into the environment.

A routine I would like to turn into a checklist:

3. Keeping Important Information Together

Create one safe place for information you regularly need.

- ☐ Important phone numbers
- ☐ Healthcare information
- ☐ Appointments
- ☐ Housing information
- ☐ Bills / regular payments
- ☐ Support contacts
- ☐ Travel information
- ☐ Equipment details
- ☐ Emergency information

My notes / what applies to me:

4. Understanding Letters & Official Messages

Official communication can be dense, vague or overwhelming.

Who sent it?

What is it about?

Does it ask me to do something?

Is there a deadline?

What words do I not understand?

Who could help me check it?

5. Phone Calls Without Panic

You can prepare what to say before calling.

Phone script: "Hello, my name is _____. I am calling about _____. I need help with _____. Could you tell me what happens next?"

Who am I calling?

Why am I calling?

Information I need beside me:

Questions I want to ask:

What I need written down afterwards:

6. Making an Appointment

Break the task into smaller pieces.

Step	My plan
Find contact details	
Choose phone / online / in person	
Prepare what I need to say	
Ask for access adjustments	
Write down date and time	
Set reminders	
Plan travel	

7. Going to an Appointment

The appointment itself is only one part of the task.

Before	During	After

8. Bills & Regular Payments

A simple overview can reduce surprises.

Bill / payment	Usually due	How I remember / pay

9. Shopping Basics

Shopping is planning, transport, sensory access, decisions and money - not just picking items.

What do I need?

How will I make / use my list?

What is my spending limit?

What access / sensory support helps?

What is my backup if I cannot go?

10. Food When Energy Is Low

A realistic food system should include low-capacity days.

Capacity	Food options that work
Good-energy day	
Average day	
Low-energy day	
Very low-capacity / emergency option	

11. Laundry Without Making It a Project

Find the simplest repeatable version that works for you.

Where dirty clothes go:

How I know it is time to wash:

Simplest washing routine:

How I remember to remove / dry clothes:

What part I may want help with:

12. Cleaning in Small Pieces

A home does not need to be cleaned all at once.

5-minute task	10-minute task	Can wait

13. When Something Breaks

Create a basic sequence so the problem feels less mysterious.

Step	What I can do
1	Make the area safe
2	Work out what stopped working
3	Check instructions / simple causes
4	Photograph the problem if useful
5	Contact landlord / repair / support if needed
6	Write down what was agreed

14. Travel Planning

Know the route, access needs and backup before leaving if that helps you.

Where am I going?

How am I getting there?

What time do I need to leave?

Accessibility / sensory needs:

What do I need to take?

Backup route / way home:

15. Being on Time When Time Is Difficult

Work backwards from when you need to arrive.

Work backwards	Time
Need to arrive	
Journey takes	
Extra access / waiting time	
Need to leave home	
Getting-ready time	
Start getting ready	

16. Passwords, Scams & Personal Information

Simple digital boundaries can prevent common problems.

- ☐ Do not share passwords or PINs
- ☐ Use unique passwords where possible
- ☐ Be cautious with unexpected payment requests
- ☐ Do not give remote access to a stranger
- ☐ Check who sent a message before clicking
- ☐ Pause if someone creates urgency
- ☐ Ask a trusted person if unsure
- ☐ Use official contact routes when verifying a request

My notes / what applies to me:

17. Emails & Messages

A useful message does not need to sound fancy.

Simple structure: Hello _____. I am contacting you about _____. I need / would like _____. Please could you _____. Thank you.

My message:

18. Asking Someone to Explain

You are allowed to request clearer information.

- ☐ Can you explain that in plain language?
- ☐ Can you write that down?
- ☐ What do I need to do next?
- ☐ When does this need to be done by?
- ☐ Can you give me an example?
- ☐ Can we go through one step at a time?

My notes / what applies to me:

19. Saying No to Plans

Declining an invitation does not require a long defence.

Examples: “Thanks for asking, but I cannot make it.” • “I am not available.” • “I need a quiet day, so I will pass this time.”

A version that sounds like me:

20. When Plans Change

Unexpected changes can create practical and sensory problems.

What changed?

What practical problem does the change create?

What information do I need now?

What can stay the same?

What is my new plan?

What recovery / processing time might I need?

21. Hosting or Having Visitors

Your home can still have boundaries.

How much notice I prefer:

Times visitors work best for me:

How long I am comfortable hosting:

Areas / belongings that are private:

How I will signal that I need the visit to end:

22. Keeping Track of Household Supplies

Reduce last-minute shortages with a repeatable system.

Item	When to replace	How I remember
Toiletries		
Cleaning products		
Food staples		
Medication / health supplies		
Pet supplies		
Other		

23. My Weekly Reset

A short reset can catch practical tasks before they pile up.

- ☐ Check calendar
- ☐ Check important messages / post
- ☐ Check food
- ☐ Check medication / essential supplies
- ☐ Check laundry
- ☐ Check bins
- ☐ Check upcoming travel
- ☐ Choose one admin task
- ☐ Plan recovery / rest time

My own weekly reset routine:

24. What I Can Outsource, Share or Get Support With

Adult competence does not mean personally doing every task.

Task	Do myself	Share / support	Outsource / automate
	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐

25. My Adult-Life Experiment

Choose one frustrating task and build a better system.

Task I want to make easier:

What currently goes wrong / costs too much energy?

What system, checklist or support will I try?

How will I make the system easy to find?

What happened?

What will I keep / change?

26. My Everyday Adult-Life Cheat Sheet

Put your most useful practical systems on one page.

My weekly reset day / cue	
Where I keep important information	
How I remember appointments	
My easiest low-energy meal options	
How I track bills / payments	
My travel-planning method	
Who I ask when I do not understand something	
A phrase I use to ask for clearer information	

27. Nobody Taught Me This - Now I Know

Adult life is not one giant skill. It is hundreds of small systems.

A practical thing I understand better now:

A system I want to keep using:

Something I am allowed to do the easy way:

Something I do not need to manage alone:

The next everyday skill I want to learn:

Notes

This workbook is a general disability-focused everyday-life and skill-building resource. Financial, legal, housing, healthcare, safeguarding and technical situations can require qualified or local advice. Support needs vary, and using assistance, adaptations or automated systems is a valid way of managing adult life.

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