

# 8 Dream Jobs for Adults with ADHD



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*From the ADHD Experts at*

**ADDITUDE**  
Strategies and Support for ADHD & LD

# ADDITUDE

## Strategies and Support for ADHD & LD

A trusted source of advice and information for families touched by attention-deficit disorder—  
and a voice of inspiration to help people with ADHD find success at home, at school, and on the job.

[ADDitudeMag.com](http://ADDitudeMag.com)

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### CONTACT INFORMATION

New Hope Media – 646-366-0830  
108 West 39th St, Suite 805  
New York, NY 10018

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# 8 Dream Jobs for Adults with ADHD

Professions that utilize your strengths and minimize your challenges

BY THE EDITORS OF **ADDITUDE**

“What would you do if you knew you could not fail?” Dr. Edward Hallowell poses this bold question to patients struggling to choose a career path. The answer often helps to clarify what they value most in a profession — serving others, earning high wages, being treated with respect, meeting interesting people — and points his patients in some discreet directions.

“I have my clients write down everything they’ve liked about different jobs they’ve held, and everything they’ve hated about them,” says Kerch McCollough, an ADHD coach in Baltimore, Maryland. “Do you like standing on your feet? Dealing with the public? Working alone?”

Ask yourself some of these questions to determine which aspects of work you love, and which of them you dread. Although just about every job will involve some mundane task, doing work that — for the most part — fascinates you is critical to your ultimate job satisfaction and performance. Boredom can sidetrack you and cause you to underperform. Conversely, if a job ties in to your passions, you’ll thrive.

Second, maintain a realistic assessment of your strengths and weaknesses in the workplace. Get started by listing the aspects of past job that helped you shine, or made you falter. “The key is to be realistic,” says Kathleen Nadeau, Ph.D., a psychologist in Silver Spring, Maryland. “Some people are so determined to master their difficulties that they stick with a job they’re poorly suited for. Your efforts will be better spent if you choose a job that uses your strengths.”

**Learn more about aligning your passions and your career at <http://additu.de/job>**

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Though there's no one correct career path, some jobs are more ADHD-friendly than others. *ADDitude* has compiled a list of eight professions that may help you reach your full potential by putting your natural skills to work:

## 1. Teacher

Many adults with ADHD find joy working directly with children — in careers such as teaching or childcare. These jobs rely on your sparkling ADHD personality and thoughtful creativity, though they're sure to test your patience. To succeed in a kid-focused career, you must be able to think on your feet and transition from one task to another quickly — because when you're working with kids, anything can happen!

**Words from a Daycare Worker:** “I love working with toddlers and preschoolers; they understand me! We jump from one project to the next and they rarely know when I'm off task.”  
— *Lori, an ADDitude reader*

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Now, get the job  
— with the ADHD-  
friendly interview tips  
at [http://additu.de/  
interview](http://additu.de/interview)**

## 2. Journalist

Adults with ADHD working in journalism find the work exciting, creative, and rewarding. Journalists must roll with day-to-day changes in their work settings and assignments — covering a broad range of topics, interacting with a variety of people, and delivering a quick turnaround on assignments. This flexibility jives well with people who exhibit loads of energy, a short attention span, a low boredom threshold, and problems with sustained focus over hours or days. Hard deadlines, however, may be a challenge.

**Words from a Copy Editor:** “My best job was in a busy newsroom as a copy editor. There was constant activity and fast deadlines. If I had 15 things to focus on at once, I was golden!” — *Patti, an ADDitude reader*

## 3. Food Industry Worker

Many adults with ADHD go into the culinary arts because the work is creative and relatively unaffected by ADHD-related deficits. Cooking requires you to focus on the task at hand and take immediate steps to create a finished product, while not demanding long-range planning or lots of working memory. Unusual or flexible hours, with sporadic ebb-and-flow pacing, add just the right touch of excitement to keep you alert and focused on the job.

**Words from a Chef:** “I left corporate America to join culinary school because that was my passion. People with ADHD aren't mentally [inferior to] anyone else. They are extremely creative. If you are able to manage it, understand what your strengths are, and not feel bad about your symptoms, it's not something horrible.” — *Alexis Hernandez, Chef Contestant on The Next Food Network Star*

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## 4. Beautician

Hairstylists, manicurists, and cosmetologists are constantly meeting with new clients — each one providing a unique creative challenge requiring only short-term focus. They often remain on their feet all day and jump from task to task quickly, an ideal working environment for a hyperactive-type adult with lots of energy. Plus, the constant influx of customers provides ample social interactions and quick task turnover, leaving little opportunity for boredom.

**Words from a Hairstylist:** “Being a hairstylist is the best job for this ADHD mama. I get a new client every 45 minutes and each person is so different! I can work 10-12 hours and feel like I haven’t worked more than 3.” — *Robin, an ADDitude reader*

## 5. Small Business Owner

Starting a small business suits the strengths of ADHD. The hours are usually quite flexible, and an entrepreneur is her own boss. Work settings can vary from day to day, which accommodates the restlessness and boredom that many adults with ADHD experience. Plus, you’ll be able to focus on what you’re truly passionate about, making your career meaningful.

**Words from an Entrepreneur:** “I got the feedback in my old jobs that I was good at starting things but not at finishing projects. Being a self-employed grant writer is a way around that, because there are defined projects with a defined life to them.” — *Daniel G., an ADDitude reader*

**“I have always felt that the way the brain thinks, there’s a beauty in that, and if I’m able to look at the beauty in it, I can live my life the way I want.”** — ALEXIS HERNANDEZ, CELEBRITY CHEF WITH ADHD

## 6. Emergency First-Responders

EMTs, police officers, and firefighters must work well under pressure and be able to make split-second decisions. These jobs allow you to work in a variety of settings, while providing the kind of adrenaline-pumping excitement that helps many adults with ADHD focus their minds. When others start to panic, the ADHD brain kicks into high gear, allowing you to see problems clearly and complete the task at hand.

**Words from a Nurse:** “I’m a nurse in surgery, which is good for my ADHD because it rolls with my fleeting attention, but has enough structure to keep me focused.” — *Rebecca, an ADDitude reader*

## 7. High-Teach Startup

The under-stimulated frontal lobe of an adult with ADHD gets jump-started in the over-stimulated environment of a tech startup. Computer technicians rove throughout a company working with others to solve computer problems, while software developers generally work independently creating and

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troubleshooting computer code for programs, websites, or apps. Both jobs provide ample opportunity to problem solve and harness that ADHD hyper-focus on small details.

**Words from a Software Developer:** “Most software tasks only take a few weeks, which helps to prevent monotony. As a software developer, the problems I deal with are diverse, interesting, and require constant hands on thinking – great for keeping the ADHD mind on track.”  
— Adam, an ADDitude reader

## 8. The Arts

It should come as no surprise that adults with ADHD succeed when surrounded by other artists in a fast-paced, artistic environment. Whether it's as a TV producer, choreographer, or concert pianist, adults with ADHD are happiest when their work allows them to express their artistic abilities. After all, “There's no business like show business!”

**Words from a Theatrical Stage Manager:** “As a stage manager, it's up to me to facilitate every part of a production: from meetings and rehearsals to performances. It gives me plenty to focus on and no two days are the same. Plus, it helps that theater people are some of the kindest, kookiest people on the planet. I fit right in!” — Jessi, an ADDitude reader

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What if none of these jobs sparks your interest? Don't get discouraged if your dreams and talents don't perfectly align; the world is paved with interesting side roads. For example, if you want to be a chef but find that you're dangerously clumsy with knives, you might use your writing skills to make a career as a cookbook author or restaurant critic.

Dr. Hallowell shares the story of a client with a natural talent for art and a passion for the environment. Her dream was to become an environmental engineer, but after being rejected from all of her chosen engineering programs, she was forced to re-evaluate. Eventually, she applied to an art institute, where she was accepted and performed very well. She now uses her artistic talent to increase public awareness of environmental issues by designing and creating scale models of habitats.

Matching up your abilities with your interests is what ultimately determines a successful career. You will succeed if you learn to work with what you have, and recognize and accept yourself for who you are. No amount of money or prestige can lead to fulfillment or happiness without self-acceptance – love yourself, and it will be easier to love what you do.

**Still not sure? Ask yourself these 18 questions that will help reveal your ideal career: <http://additude/18-questions>**

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# **ADDitude Special Reports** **Available Now** [www.adhdreports.com](http://www.adhdreports.com)

## **Getting Things Done with Adult ADHD**

**Comprehensive strategies for everything from managing to-do lists to overcoming ADHD-related procrastination.**

You're not lazy, selfish, or apathetic — you have ADHD, a condition that causes problems with executive functions like planning, decision-making, and hitting deadlines. In order to overcome your deficit and manage day-to-day tasks productively, you need strategies that make sense to you — not the rest of the world. This eBook provides just that: ADHD-tested time-management plans that don't try to shove square pegs into round holes.

>> Learn More About This Special Report: <http://additu.de/productive>

## **The ADHD Guide to Mobile Apps & Digital Tools**

**100+ recommended tools to improve productivity, organization, memory, sleep, creativity, and school skills.**

You hold unlimited tools and information in the palm of your hand — literally! And now, the mobile apps on your smartphone and the digital tools on your computer can help you manage your most challenging ADHD symptoms like sleeplessness, distractibility, and disorganization. We've combed through thousands of apps to bring you more than 100 tools that will help you tackle ADHD symptoms head-on.

>> Learn more about this special report: <http://additu.de/apps2016>

## **Mindfulness and Other Natural Treatments**

**The best non-medical treatments for ADHD, including exercise, green time, and mindful meditation.**

Learn how mindfulness works on ADHD brains, and how to begin practicing it today. Plus, research the benefits of other alternative treatments like yoga and deep breathing exercises — including some designed especially for kids — as well as the science behind each natural therapy.

>> Learn more about this special report: <http://additu.de/mindfulness>

## **FREE ADDitude Downloadable Booklets**

### **Is It Adult ADHD?**

Habitually disorganized? Always running late? It could be ADHD.

### **22 Clutter-Busting Strategies**

Calm the chaos with these easy-to-implement tips.

### **The Daily Routine That Works for Adults with ADHD**

Build a system that keeps your day humming along.

### **You Know You Have ADHD When...**

Real ADHDers share personal stories highlighting the lighter side of living with attention deficit.

### **Never Be Late Again**

Time management tips for adults with ADHD.

### **Celebrities Living with ADHD**

Famous people on how they found success with attention deficit.

### **Stop Procrastinating!**

18 ADHD-friendly ways to get it done — without dawdling.

**Find these and many more free ADHD resources online at:**  
<http://additu.de/freedownloads>

## FREE ADHD Webinar Replays from ADDitude:

### Stick to Your Goals, the ADHD Way

>> <http://additu.de/goals>

Each year, countless adults with ADHD make resolutions that just don't stick — but it doesn't have to be that way! In this audio and slide presentation, hosted by Judith Kolberg, learn how you can implement behavior-modifying strategies to help you achieve your goals and get your life organized.

### Overcome ADHD Procrastination

>> <http://additu.de/procrastination>

Is *just getting started* always the hardest part of the task for you? In this webinar, J. Russell Ramsay, Ph.D., explains how to identify your “tipping points” that will spur you to start and finish projects.

### Smart Money Strategies for Adults with ADHD

>> <http://additu.de/ta>

You don't need to be an investment banker to make financially sound decisions. In this expert webinar hosted by Stephanie Sarkis, Ph.D., you'll learn how ADHD's executive function challenges can lead to problems with money — and what you can do to compensate for setbacks and save, spend, budget, and plan like the pros!

### 7 Fixes for Self-Defeating ADHD Behaviors

>> <http://additu.de/brown>

Are your bad habits setting you up for failure? Find out what behaviors to watch for, and seven simple changes that can help you reach your full potential and put you on the path to success. Entrepreneur and ADHD coach Alan Brown teaches “fix-it” strategies that he used to cope with his own ADHD.

### How to Turn Your Boredom into Action

>> <http://additu.de/boredom>

ADHD brains are forever seeking physical or mental stimulation. When you're bored, it can literally sap your motivation to continue. Learn how to avoid the pitfalls of boredom, boost your executive functions, and keep your mind focused and productive with this expert webinar from Jeff Copper!

## FREE ADHD Newsletters from ADDitude

**Sign up to receive critical news and information about ADHD diagnosis and treatment, success at school, adult ADHD, and parenting strategies:**  
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Expert advice on managing your household, time, money, career, and relationships

### Parenting ADHD and LD Children (weekly)

Strategies and support for parents on behavior and discipline, time management, disorganization, and making friends.

### ADHD and LD at School (bimonthly; weekly from August through October)

How to get classroom accommodations, finish homework, work with teachers, find the right schools, and much more.

### Treating ADHD (weekly)

Treatment options for attention deficit including medications, food, supplements, brain training, mindfulness and other alternative therapies.