



THE HOUSE
THAT
ADHD
BUILT

Written and Illustrated by Rob Hanly

THE PURPOSE

The purpose of this e-book is to guide you in creating an organised, (but not anal!) sanctuary that you can relax and rest in. There'll be step-by-step instructions, and there'll be ideas for you to build on. There'll be a few pictures and diagrams, and you might even find a gem that changes your life.

There's **one rule** I ask you to follow when reading this book, a challenge I pose to you. **Every time you think an idea 'could' work, or 'might' help, try it! If it works, live by it!** And hey, if it doesn't work, you're still a step ahead of so many others - you're actively making changes in your life to get the results you're after.

INTRO	3
SETTING OUT THE HOUSE	4
an introduction to the way this book works	
MAKIN' THE RULES	7
the purpose of rules	
'do rules' aren't don't rules	
make rules a habit, not a habit of making rules	
making the rules	
THE FOUR STATIONS	14
what's in a station?	
communication	
destination	
education	
administration	
KEEPING IT CLEAN	20
better than you found it	
cleaning day	
checklists	
ALL IN THE FAMILY	24
keeping it all together	
family meetings	
WEB SLINGING	27
browsing it right	
firefox addons	
OUTRO	30

We all want to feel chilled out at home. We want to feel safe, relaxed and at ease with our environment. Our home is our element, where we don't feel out of place

I, like many others with ADD/ADHD, know how it feels to have a messy room. For some years, I felt it was no big deal to have piles of clothing and paper all over the floor. Why would I? Hey, I knew where everything was, right?

Over the course of over 20 years of disorganised living, I never recognised I was feeling stressed or overwhelmed by my room. I say I never recognised this because it wasn't until I made the decision to Spartanise my living arrangements and acted upon it that I stopped feeling stressed and overwhelmed. Before this, I hadn't ever felt any different. But when I could walk from one side of my room to the other without performing an unbalanced Macarena, and could find my keys without tearing up 16 piles of unidentifiable washing (yes, I used to sometimes do the sniff test), I felt an indescribable sense of control over my life. It was just magic. Finally, I could up and go for real.

Since I made the decision to have a room with more structure and definition, I've become more productive and produced higher quality work. I'm more relaxed than ever, and I have nothing I don't need.

I finally feel at home.

setting
out the
house

THE LEAST YOU NEED TO KNOW

When setting up a house or room, it's important to know what you're setting it up for. Are you creating a house that is suited for a single person living in an apartment, or do you need to account for a family of four with both children under ten?

Consider the **needs** you have, and how you can use the ideas and principles you'll come across over the next few pages to meet them. And then do it.

For maximum success, here's a simple step-by-step process for you to use:

1. Define The Needs

What does your household need? Is it restrictions on bringing friends home, or encouragement to do homework? Perhaps you need to organise the house into zones, so that everything has its place or just put some rules in place to help guide everyone into a happier household.

2. Meet The Needs

So you've figured out the needs, now the next question is how do you address them? What positive action can you take to create guides, boundaries, limits or processes to get the outcomes that everyone is after?

IF YOU WANT
THE BEST, TWEAK
FOR SUCCESS.

3. Test The New System

Put your new need answers into place and test them out for at least a fortnight. Are they working? How well are they working? Could they be better? Are they effective? Is everyone benefiting?

4. Tweak for success

Very rarely does something go perfectly on the first go. Be prepared to make changes along the way, and improve your system as you go! This is important to remember - plan, take action, make changes.

The more **aware** you are of the changes you make, and the more **consciously** you make them, the **bigger** the results you witness will be. There only immediate cure and quick fix you'll find through this book is **immediate action**.

You can decide to make changes and act on them within seconds of finishing a sentence that provides you with insight. What are you waiting for?

makin

the

rules

RULES ARE THERE FOR EVERYONE'S HAPPINESS, NOT ONE SINGLE PERSON'S

The Purpose Of Rules

With ADHD rules aren't mere guidelines, they're **words to live by**. They help us make our decisions quicker because we've already defined what is and is not acceptable. By taking this concept and implementing it into our house, we are able to set limits and boundaries for ourselves and others. Rules are there to **benefit everybody** and help everyone relax, not just one person.

Yes, there will be times when the rules will be challenged. There will be times when they're blatantly broken. When this happens, take a second and leave your ego at the door, and ask the rebellious rule-breaker why they broke the rules. Asking this out of curiosity instead of discipline could shed new light on the rules - maybe they've become outdated, unrealistic or irrelevant.

Encouraging everyone to have their say when the rules are being challenged can help you work to create fair and reasonable rules without anyone losing their head.

Who Creates The Rules

Depending on the household, the rules can be created by different groups. In these groups, however, it is important to note that **one person** should always have the final say - this avoids a never-ending cycle of discussion by having a nominated end point.

THE FINAL SAY
IS IMPORTANT,
BUT THE POWER
SHOULDN'T BE
ABUSED.

Consider the following people for having the final say in a household:

- Household of a family with young children: Parents (although some families find it more effective to have either Mum or Dad be the ultimate in the Final Say)
- Household of a family with adult children: Parents again are often the ones with the Final Say. However, some families find the idea of an open table democracy where everyone is involved in the decision process to be a less friction-creating method.
- Household of Adults in a shared house: If the property is leased, the people who have their name on the lease have Final Say. If the property is owned, it is the owner who has Final Say. However, there may come a time when there is an even number of people on the lease/who own the property. In this case, those people will have to be honest and weigh up the pros and cons of the Rules if the need arises. If the Spartans could run a population with two kings, then surely a household can do similar.

'Do Rules' Aren't Don't Rules

Don't picture a pink elephant.

If you just pictured a pink elephant, the following statement will ring very true. When we're told not to do something, we have to identify that which

we're not meant to do first before we don't do it - and that can mean thinking of all the positive neuro-associations we have with it. Consider smokers who tell themselves "don't smoke", but constantly have a smoke in their hand while they're laughing with friends in social settings.

Stop confusing your brain. Be straight with yourself, and **set positive rules**.

"What the hell is a positive rule, Rob? Are you crazy? Rules are rules, man!" I can hear you saying. Hear me out, and I'll explain the difference.

A negative rule is the kind of rule you're used to hearing - it's restrictive and usually phrased with any of the following words or phrasings:

don't, do not, shall not, will not, may not, can't, cannot, not allowed, banned

Rules with these words usually rub us the wrong way. Check it out:

Don't *hit your sister!*

Do not *run!*

You **shall not** *carry your mobile phone on your person during the following hours.*

You **may not** *have hair longer than your eye.*

Students **cannot** *drive to school.*

RULES SHOULD
GUIDE AND
ENCOURAGE,
INSTEAD OF
RESTRICT

You are **not allowed** to bring notes into the exam.

Bombing off the diving board is **banned**.

Notice that rebellious nature of yours start to rise up when you read these words? It's no surprise! Around half of the diagnosed cases of ADD/ADHD in children are also recognised as having **Oppositional Defiance Disorder!** So rather than poking a potentially sleeping dragon, let's see how these same rules can be executed for the same results, but in a different way.

Respect your sister's personal space by keeping your hands to yourself.

Please walk at all times in these hallways.

Please keep your phone in your drawer in the following hours, or just switch it off. You'll get your work done quicker and can use your phone afterwards.

Having your hair in your eyes can be an OHS issue, so to keep your good health and avoid getting hurt, please keep it trimmed to above your eyes.

Students are to catch public transport only to school.

All notes are to be left at the door to the exam.

For the fun and safety of yourself and others, the following diving styles are allowed off the diving board: pin drop, swan dive, racing dive. Thank you.

These are positive rules. They are encouraging and informative, not to

mention polite. Rather than setting restrictions, they give **guidance for action**. For the parents, here's one more comparison:

*You **can't** stay up past 8:30pm tonight.*

vs

You can stay up until 8:30pm if you're well-behaved.

The art of setting positive rules is easy to get into, and is beneficial to not just yourself but the people you live with. By reframing your rules from a negative rule to a positive rule, you'll be taking the path of less resistance and increasing the chances that they'll be followed.

Make a rule for yourself to create 'do rules' that empower people by giving an activity or task to do, instead of making rules that stop people from doing activities. They'll feel freer, and value the lack of restrictions you place on them.

Make Rules A Habit, Not a Habit of Making Rules.

Rules are most effective when they're congruent with what we want, and help us achieve something that we care about. For some people, rules will help keep a house clean enough to be proud of. For others, rules will make them feel relaxed by knowing where everything is.

By using rules as a point of leverage to help us develop new habits that work

THE SECRET TO MAKING RULES WORK IS PERSONAL INVESTMENT

towards positive outcomes, they come to be integrated into daily life as habits as opposed to a strict doctrine that must be followed.

Use your rules to help **develop** a home that **thrives**, rather than a home that denies.

Making The Rules

The rules have been made. The rules are positive. The rules are real. "But how do I make people take **ownership** of it, Rob?" you ask. Let me break it down for you.

Have everyone invest in it. That's the "**secret**" to keeping the rules in everyone's mind. When people are proud of something they've done or contributed to, they're happier to make themselves **accountable** for their work. By changing the rules from an abstract idea to a physically represented rule set, you also make it real.

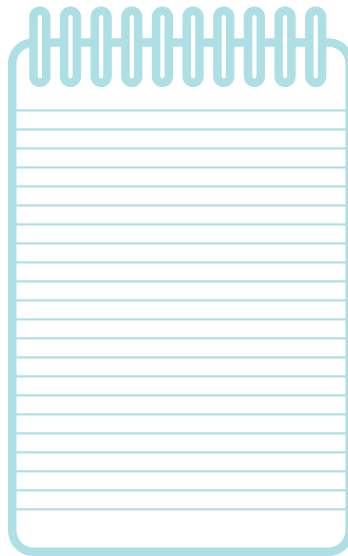
If you have children, sit down with them and have them write out the House Rules, and decorate it with pictures and colours. They'll be proud of their work, and want you to display it. Bingo! You've already got them proud of the work they've done. **These aren't just your rules, they're their rules, too!**

If it's a group of adults that you live with, you could try repeating the above. Or, you could have everyone chip in a couple of bucks and pay for a designer to draw it up. Maybe have a rule party, to celebrate the start of a happier era. Have a barbeque, a few drinks and make positive neuro-associations with the rules in the minds of everyone. When people invest positively into a task or idea, they're not just accountable - they're readily so.

the four
stations

In each house, there are four key stations that should be implemented to keep everyone on the same page. You can use this system in bedrooms in Multiple Adult Share Houses as well, as it is rare that MASHs will have a need for shared education, destination and administration stations.

MAIL, PHONE
MESSAGES,
NOTES AND
NOTICES.

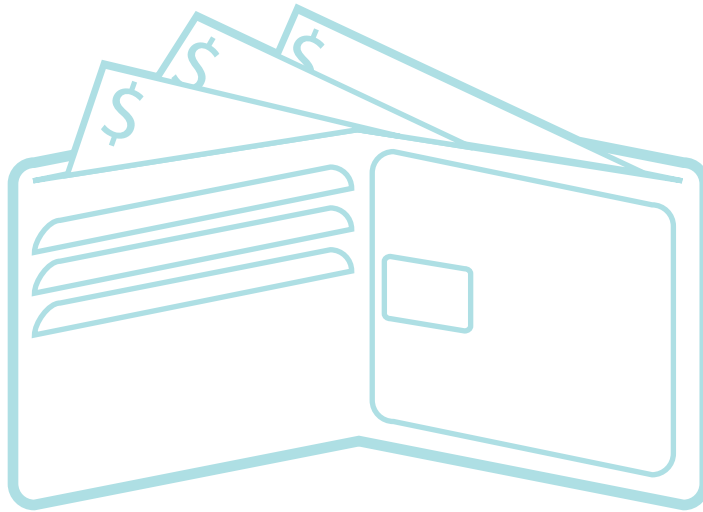
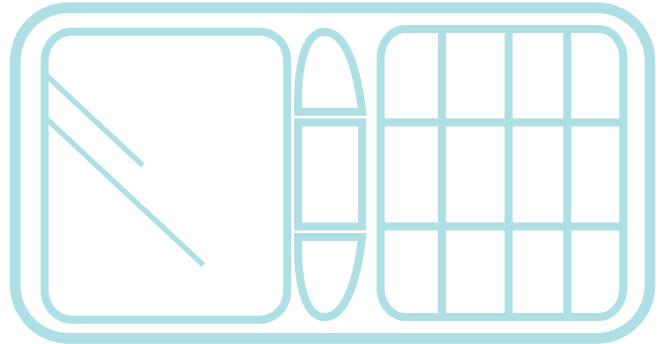
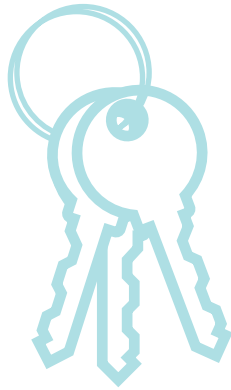


Communication

Your communication station is how you and other members of the household interact with each other. For some households, a notepad beside the phone will suffice. For others, filing systems with areas for each individual member of the household are more appropriate.

The communication station can be used to pass along notes, distribute bills to those who have to pay them or leave missed phone call messages, and far more things.

PHONE, PHONE
CHARGER, KEYS,
WALLET, PEN,
NOTEBOOK, BAG,
MONEY

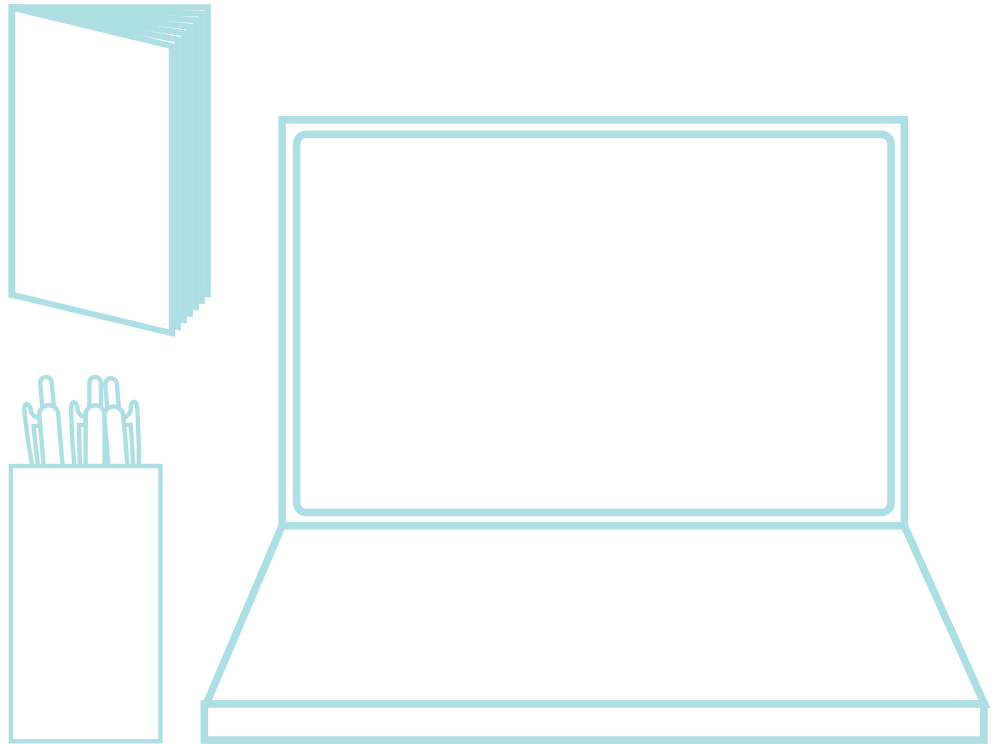


Destination

Your destination station has everything you need for when you step out the door and get involved with the outside world. It can include your keys, a bag you packed the night before (a personal rule of mine), mobile phones with chargers and wallets or credit cards and money.

By keeping all of these possessions together in the same place, you always know where to find them.

PENS, TEXT
BOOKS,
COMPUTER
WRITING PAPER,
STATIONARY,



Education

The Education Station is the home of learning and academics within your household or room. Usually, this is where you'll find your computer, exercise books, stationery and text books. For kids, you can include coloured textas and pencils to draw with, and nurture a positive neuro-association with this area.

I found that by identifying an area that I use specifically for education related activities, I was able to tap into 'the zone' or state and get into my work quickly and efficiently with little worry - just by sitting in the same spot every time! Each time I sat down, the work got easier to do, and my focus got stronger!

BILLS (PAID AND UNPAID), RECEIPTS, INVOICES, FILED DOCUMENTS

Administration

Bills, receipts, invoices and financial documents all belong at the Administration Station. Often referred to as the home office, this is where the bills get paid to keep the electricity on.

If you don't have the space for a home office, a drawer in the desk where you keep the computer can suffice. Just make sure to keep the paid bills separate from the unpaid bills!

keeping

it clean

A PLACE FOR EVERYTHING AND EVERYTHING IN IT'S PLACE

Cleaning the house can be a daunting task for an ADHD person. I know, because every fortnight I clean the two-storey house I live in – and I used to always get distracted. Putting it off was easier for me than just getting the task done! Then, for the next two weeks between cleans, I'd be finding things I'd missed. Or even worse, my family would be!

I want to **alleviate** you of the pain of cleaning, so I've collected a few techniques and ideas for you to use.

The Golden Rule Of House Organisation

It's not where you're going to put it. **It's where you're going to find it.**

Better Than You Found It

When you walk out of a room, do you leave it better than you found it? Do you take that glass to the kitchen, or fix up that cushion? If you do this small action every time you leave a room, think about how much of an effect this can have! You can create a mountain of effect from molehills of action, just by doing this consistently. After all, it's **consistency that achieves results.**

When you leave a room, make a conscious effort to leave it **better** than you found it. It's often best to take on the biggest possible task too – trust me, once you've made the bed for the day, you won't want to do it again if you don't have to! When you first start doing this, you'll be doing it consciously. You'll have to train your brain to take on this new mode of action, but over the course of only a few weeks you'll have developed a habit for life.

Cleaning Day

Having a nominated day for cleaning can be incredibly effective. Not only does it tie in with setting the rules of a household, but it creates structure and limits for the ADD/ADHD individual. Every week, or fortnight, on the same day, the cleaning task can be undertaken.

When you start creating a household routine, you'll find that everyone works together to achieve the same thing. Finally, all your ropes will be pulling in the same direction, meaning that tasks get done **quicker and more effectively**. And, even better, you'll all be much **happier**.

Checklists

Using checklist for cleaning duties is great for ADD/ADHDers for a multitude of reasons. First, it gives a sense of **purpose and direction** – everything that needs to be done is there right in front of you, and can be referenced at any time. It's like a daily to-do list, just more focused!

By having a checklist for each individual room, the task seems even more manageable! The daunting job of cleaning a big house becomes the job of cleaning 20 rooms, and the job of cleaning 20 rooms becomes five quick activities. This is great! It not only instils a sense of **achievement** as you cross each activity off your list, and eventually each room, but it also has a snowball effect.

A snowball effect occurs as you gather momentum from doing lots of little tasks that gradually start to make a big difference. When you do your first

TO GET
SNOWBALLING
HAPPENING,
YOU'VE GOT TO
GET THE FIRST
SNOWFLAKE TO
FALL!

activity of cleaning it might only be a snowflake, but by the time you get to the final activity on your list, you'll have an avalanche of clean! **Start pushing that snowball now!**

To make lists more environmentally friendly and cost-effective, print them out at A6 in size (1/4 the size of a normal A4 page) - you can do this by using inserting a table into a Word document and typing out individual lists. When you've got all your lists printed out, get them laminated, and punch a hole in the top left hand corner. Now tie them together using some string, or even a metal ring. Congratulations! You've created a pocket size checklist that a house cleaner can constantly check off with a whiteboard marker and stay on track with - just what the ADHD individual needs!

all in the
family

DO YOUR FAMILY MEETINGS LOOK AT THE FAMILY OR THE BEHAVIOUR?

FAMILY MEETINGS

If you choose to hold family meetings, make sure they aren't solely to bring to attention what people are doing wrong. Make them a generally **positive** experience, and members of the household will be more open and honest, not to mention willing, in participating in a family meeting.

When I was growing up, there was a period where we seemed to have family meetings all the time. And it was always because there was a fight between my sister and I. Family meetings became synonymous with trouble, and as a result we began fighting against the family meetings as well! It won't come as a surprise to you that our resistance to family meetings before they actually started made the meeting itself useless.

Yes, there is a need to remand people and pull them into line. I'll be the first to admit that. However, if you use family meetings as purely a means to sort out 'serious issues', you'll find that everyone will begin to associate family meetings with getting in trouble, even if that's not what all your meetings are about!

In many ways, it's similar to when you were at school. Remember the Principal's office and how getting called to it made you start sweating, even if you thought you hadn't done anything wrong? This is exactly what you don't want your family meetings to be - you want it to be a place where people can share ideas and thoughts, achievements both in and outside of school can be recognised and people can catch up.

Meetings don't have to be painful.

Family/House Member Organisation

Having multiple people in the house at different stages of their lives can make it difficult to know whether everyone will be home for dinner, let alone where they are at any given time! This gets even harder as everyone gets older and individual timetables become more prominent. Over the course of a year, it can be even harder to know where everyone is at in the big picture! To solve this problem, there's a couple of options you can implement:

- Get a Family Calendar. For every day, have a column per person. Stationary brand Kiki K used to stock these for an affordable price and could have up to six people per day listed.
- Use Google Calendars. My family currently has individual calendars, but we all have shared access to the "Hanly Family" calendar, which has details on everything including birthdays, parties, nights out for dinner and jobs that need to be done.

If these two options aren't to your liking, develop your own system of Family/House Member Organisation based upon the four step system which you discovered at the start of this book.

web
slinging

GOT A PROBLEM
YOU CAN CURE
BY CUTTING
SOMETHING
OUT? DO IT!

BROWSING IT RIGHT

When it comes to the internet, it can be a veritable **addiction**. You're always seeking a constant stream of stimulus. There's always a new youtube video or website to check out, or maybe it's staying up to date and making new friends and contacts on the tried and true [Facebook](#), [Myspace](#) and [Bebo](#). Maybe you're just discovering the brand new and exciting online worlds of [Twitter](#) and [DoubleTheFun](#), where you can establish business contacts or social and dating contacts. Whatever it is that holds your attention, sometimes that cuddly hold of the internet turns into a controlling stranglehold and you can't turn your head away from browsing.

When it comes to browsing, Firefox is an ADD/ADHDer's **best friend**. Not only is it a faster and secure browser, but it is **highly customisable** through the use of add-ons that can handle everything from design to productivity. I've been using it for years and have yet to run into a problem with it, and favour it above all the others. If you don't have it yet, you can grab it from <http://www.mozilla.com/firefox/>

Firefox ADD-ons

To save you the time and effort of going through all the Firefox add-ons (although I highly recommend you do), here are the two most powerful ones that I use. Installing and setting them up usually takes no more than five minutes and the time they get you back is immeasurable! So, with all the effort practically taken out of the equation for you, use the links in this document to get yourself and your home computers set up for success!

Meetimer

<https://addons.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/addon/5168>

From Meetimer's home page:

"MeeTimer is about understanding. Once you understand which activities are taking your time, you can become proactive in reclaiming it. It is also about actively discouraging time wasting, to help you achieve your goals; and it does this by guiding your actions, not by controlling what you can or cannot do."

Leechblock

<https://addons.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/addon/4476>

If Meetimer isn't strong enough to curb your addiction to the internet, it's time to bring out the big guns. And that's the cue for Leechblock to come out, all barrels blazing. Leechblock is Meetimer on steroids, and will actually restrict you from visiting those sites you just can't help yourself with. Maybe it's email, perhaps it's Digg, or maybe you just get lost on Wikipedia because you keep getting brought back to the Red Power Ranger. Whatever it is, Leechblock will stop your procrastination habits dead in their tracks! You choose when sites are blocked, how long for, and even what days. Perfect.

I want to thank you for taking the time to read this e-book. If you got something out of it, please tell people about it. Give them the link to ADDucation, so that they too can benefit from this resource.

I want to thank you again, this time for for the opportunity to share with you some of the ideas and solutions I've come across over a lifetime of ADHD and a couple of years of working with ADHDers. Thanks to all those people, who if I'd never worked with I would have never been able to have such a objective look at the life that I and my family live, as well as how other households with ADHDers live.

Good luck with implementing these ideas into your lives - I hope that you all get as much from this book as you can, and see some awesome life changes.

Rob

<http://www.adducation.com.au>