

Time Keeping and Punctuality

Being 'on time' or 'punctual' means being able to arrive, complete tasks and meet obligations at or by a designated time.



For example, meeting a friend at an agreed time or completing work to an agreed deadline are both examples of good timekeeping and punctuality.

It is very important to be punctual. It shows that you can be trusted. If you say you will meet someone at 8am and you don't actually arrive until 8.15, you have essentially broken your promise to them and gone against your word. This may lead the other person feeling that you are unreliable. This is particularly important in the workplace as repeated lateness could lead to you losing your job. If you are late for a medical appointment, staff may simply cancel your appointment.

Being on time shows that you are reliable and dependable and that you can be trusted. These are important qualities that are looked for by both friends and employers. It also shows that you are able to successfully organise and manage your time.

Punctuality is also good for your wellbeing. If you allow plenty of time to complete a task or reach a destination, you can carry this out without having to rush or put yourself under stress. Having to hurry at the last minute can be very stressful.

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Being on time also shows respect for the person you are meeting or your place of work. It demonstrates that you value other people's time and respect important social rules and conventions.

Being late can also be disruptive. Arriving late to work or to a class disturbs colleagues or fellow students who may have already settled into their work.

Many people with Asperger Syndrome or High Functioning Autism have difficulty with timekeeping and being punctual. This is because we find it harder to have an intuitive and instinctive sense of the passing of time, than non-autistic people.

There are, however, strategies that can be used to overcome this.

Wear a watch

Wearing a watch every day can help. Experiment with whether an analogue or digital watch is easier for you to use. Try to remember to look at your watch regularly so that you know what time it is. Use your watch to time tasks that



you do each day and journeys that you take so that you know how much time to allow for them when planning your day.

SCHEDULE



Make a daily schedule

Try making a daily schedule of activities you need to do. Include everything on this schedule that needs to be completed to time. For example you could include what time you need to get up, time in the shower, time to eat breakfast and get dressed, time to get the bus to work or college and so on. Make sure you allow enough time for each task and look at a watch or clock regularly to ensure you are keeping to your schedule. If in doubt, allow more time than you think is necessary.

If you find that a task regularly takes longer than the allotted time on your schedule, you can adjust your schedule to allow more time. If you find that you don't have enough time to complete the tasks on your schedule, consider making changes such as getting up earlier.

Have timekeeping devices in each room

If you find it particularly hard to gauge the passing of time, having clocks in every room can help. Waterproof clocks are available for the bathroom and kitchen.



Use timers or set alarms

If you find that you forget to look at clocks, or that you need something clearer, try using a timer or stopwatch. Here are some examples

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You may also have a timer application on your mobile phone or be able to download one for free. Additionally, some watches have timers and alarms on them.

Setting alarms on your clock, watch or phone are also useful ways of keeping to time and remembering important things such as when to take medication.

If you have trouble waking up on time, using an alarm clock, or setting an alarm on your phone or radio can be invaluable to help you get up on time. If you rely on these, it is important to make sure your phone has plenty of charge and that your clock or radio has its batteries changed regularly.

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Some people on the autism spectrum have hyper acute hearing and cannot cope with the loud beeping or ringing of alarms. If this is the case, Action on Hearing Loss sell alarm clocks that have vibrating pads that go under your pillow, as an alternative to making a loud noise. You can find them at <http://www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk/shop.aspx>
You may also be able to set the alarm on your mobile phone to vibrate rather than produce sound.

If you find that you are running late, don't panic. Contact your work, college or the person you are meeting and apologise and explain that you are going to be a little late. Occasional lateness can be forgiven, but it is important to avoid being late wherever possible.

