



Task Triage: How to Stop Spinning and Start Winning

Ryan Mayer ([00:01](#)):

Hello and welcome to TADD Talks with the Attention Deficit Disorder Association. This is Ryan Mayer, certified ADHD coach coming to you from Tropical Cleveland, Ohio. I'm excited to once again be here participating in these talks and just grateful that ADDA has given me the chance to share some of my thoughts and ideas and strategies with you on how you can be successful with your ADHD. In fact, as a small token of my appreciation I just wanted to let you know I'm going to be giving away a free month of coaching for two lucky listeners. It's a \$700 value, nothing to sneeze at. All you have to do is listen to the end to find out how you can be entered to win, but just in case you don't make it to the end, no judgment, zero judgment here. Just wanted to tell you upfront that if you do like my content or my delivery or like to learn more about how I support other people like us with ADHD, you can find me on all the social media platforms.

Ryan Mayer ([01:01](#)):

You can just search for the username, ADHD Coach Ryan, or my website at ryanmayercoaching.com, and that's M-A-Y-E-R. So today I want to give you some actionable tips on how to stop treating every task in your life like an emergency. Because that's sometimes how it feels, right? So if you live with ADHD like I do, you know the feeling, every single thing that pops into our brain feels urgent. The email, the dishes, the big project, even remembering to water the plants, our brain treats it all like red flashing alarms, right? That's exhausting. It creates a sense of chaos, guilt, shame, and ultimately paralysis. So that's where this technique that I want to tell you about today of task triage comes in. Task triage is pretty simple. It's a rapid decision making tool, just like you would see in an emergency room. Not every patient can get treated at once.

Ryan Mayer ([02:07](#)):

There's only so many doctors, nurses, medical staff. They have to quickly decide who needs care right now, who can safely wait, and then who doesn't need treatment at all. We can apply that same mindset to our to-do list task triage. It helps us to zoom out, prioritize in seconds, see things from really the bigger picture and stop our ADHD brain from getting stuck in, ah, everything's on fire, everything's urgent mode. And the best part, it only takes 30 to 60 seconds. So we can't say we don't have time. I like to keep things really simple when I'm working with my clients. So this is a three category, three step model here. So I use these three sticky categories.

Ryan Mayer ([03:00](#)):



First one is critical care. These are tasks you have to do right now, true emergencies, because if it doesn't get done today, there's gonna be true consequences. Think a deadline a bill due tonight project that you have to finish today because you have a meeting with your boss, picking up your kid from school, getting them to soccer practice. I literally have to do that tonight. These are the items that you put the stars next to, or whatever symbol you want. The second category after critical care would be scheduled surgery. These are the important tasks, but not emergency tasks. They definitely matter, but you've got a little bit of breathing room. Okay? So practical example, you're preparing for a presentation that's due next week. Or ironically, you could be booking a doctor's appointment. You could be scheduling an oil change, things that are important-ish, but not super urgent. These belong on the calendar though, because if we don't schedule them, they end up going where into that critical emergency pile later, right?

Ryan Mayer ([04:13](#)):

The third one, the third category is something we could consider outpatient or even a well visit. These are the let it wait delegate or drop it. They're low risk tasks. You know, the ones that don't require urgent treatment, so to speak, they can safely wait. They could be handled by someone else on your team perhaps, or sometimes not get done at all. That's actually probably the hardest category, is knowing when to say no. A quick little reminder on that, I always tell my clients, remember, whenever you say yes to something, whether that's a person or a food, or a temptation, or you know, joining a committee or whatever that means you're saying no to everything else that you could be doing. Keep that in mind for this outpatient third category. Think of things like reorganizing your desk, scrolling for new recipes, or fixing a typo in last week's notes or something.

Ryan Mayer ([05:18](#)):

These are outpatient tasks. So this three category triage, it's like a stripped down, ADHD friendly version of the Eisenhower Matrix. No charts, no grids, just fast, clear categories, buckets that your brain can remember. So here's the practical strategy. Grab your list, or if you don't have a list, get ready to make one. If your brain is swirling right now, you could just do a quick brain dump. You could pause this audio if you want. Just remember to come back, but just dump it into a paper, onto a note app. Then ask yourself, if this were an emergency room, what's

Ryan Mayer ([05:57](#)):

Critical care? What could be scheduled surgery for later? Or what's an outpatient, or well visit that's not emergency. Then pick some sort of symbol to mark each task with. So this could be a star, this could be a circle, this could be triangle, whatever. And then this part is key. The fourth step is take immediate action on one of the critical care tasks. That single step at the end, taking action, getting the ball moving, that reduces overwhelm, it builds momentum, and it quiets that internal fire alarm and the negative self-talk. Here's a bonus, if you repeat, if you repeat, repeat, repeat this triage exercise each day, your ADHD brain starts to trust the system and do it automatically. So instead of spinning an emergency mode all the time, you'll start thinking like a doctor and be in ready mode instead of emergency crazy mode. You'll start seeing what's truly urgent and what's truly not. So just remember ADHD brains get



stuck trying to do it all, all at once, and we can't do that task. Triage gives your brain a friendly an ADHD friendly way to decide what deserves your attention right now and what can safely wait. So here's your Ryan reminder. Try this one minute triage task today, sort your to-do list into critical care scheduled surgery and outpatient visit, and notice how much lighter your brain feels.

Ryan Mayer ([07:35](#)):

Congratulations, you made it all the way to the end. I hope you enjoyed this TED style TADD Talk, and just like I promised, I now want to tell you how to unlock a free month of coaching with me. And all you need to do is visit ryanmayercoaching.com/tadd25. That's TADD 2025. And finally, as I always like to remind my clients and my neurodivergent friends on social media, this is your Ryan reminder, letting you know you're not alone. ADHD does not define you. It's just part of who you are. I believe in you. You got this, and I can't even make this up. My kids bus just pulled up to the corner, so I literally have to run. But I love you and I believe in you. Bye.