

# Using Fidgeting to Improve Your Focus

## Objective

To understand and manage your fidgeting as a way to help you focus.

## You Should Know

Tapping your feet, swinging your legs, pacing, drumming your fingers ... these are some of the fidgeting movements you may do as a teen with ADHD.

You may be surprised to learn that fidgeting can help increase your ability to focus on your schoolwork and other tasks. It can also help decrease your feelings of anxiety. The key is to use your fidgeting behavior in a way that helps you be productive, instead of distracting.

Of course, sometimes you really can't fidget at all. Here are some examples of when you really have to be still:

- When you are in the dentist chair.
- When you are disturbing someone next to you and they ask you to stop fidgeting.
- When a teacher tells you to stop fidgeting and be still.

Can you think of other times when you shouldn't be doing any kind of fidgeting?

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## What to Do

There are a variety of items and activities you can use to redirect your energy. Each of them can help use up extra energy and stimulation, while improving your mood and attention.

- Fidget toys including pens or pencils, beaded bracelets, and paper clips that bend into shapes.
- A small, smooth rock (sometimes called a "worry stone") that fits in the palm of your hand.
- A squeeze ball.
- Chewing gum, unless you are in school; in which case, a piece of hard candy.
- Doodling (drawing or writing letters and numbers).
- Physical activity and exercise, including standing up and moving around when permitted.

What other fidget activities and items have you tried? Which are you most interested to try?

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Select a few items and activities from the list above as ways that fidgeting can help you focus. Use the chart below to think about how fidgeting activities can help you.

Type of activity	Where do you use it?	Did it bother anyone?	How did it help you?

### Reflections on This Exercise

When and where do you fidget the most? Why?

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How else can you use up energy besides fidgeting?

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How else can you focus besides fidgeting?

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How helpful was this exercise? \_\_\_\_\_

(1 = not very helpful, 5= moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

Is there anything in particular you learned from this exercise?

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