

ADULT AUTISM IN DAILY LIFE · 9.6

Sensory Survival Kit: What to Carry, Wear, and Have at Home

Sensory load is a real daily cost for many autistic adults, and it compounds. Small practical changes carry weight far above their effort. A sensory survival kit, organised by where you spend your time, is one of the more useful daily-living tools available.

FOR

Autistic adults

AUDIENCE AGE

18+

REVIEWED

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PART OF

The NeuroFX resource library

IN SUMMARY

Sensory Survival Kit: What to Carry, Wear, and Have at Home

What sensory difference actually means

- **Eight senses, not five.** Alongside sight, sound, touch, taste and smell are vestibular (balance and movement), proprioceptive (where the body is in space) and interoceptive (hunger, thirst, temperature, needing the toilet). Autistic adults can be over-responsive, under-responsive or seeking in each.
- **There is no single autistic sensory profile.** It is common to be over-responsive in one sense and seeking in another. The kit is yours; copy what fits, ignore what does not.
- **Sensory load is cumulative.** The day's total exhausts the regulatory budget. The kit is about reducing the load, not eliminating it. Home is where the bank balance recovers, or fails to.

What to carry and wear

- **In the bag.** Noise-cancelling headphones (the single highest-impact item for many). Low-profile earplugs (Loop and similar) for environments where headphones would be awkward. Sunglasses, even on grey days. Water bottle. A safe food. A regulating playlist. A small soft item if texture helps.
- **On the body.** Clothes that fit your sensory profile, even if the range is narrow. Repeat-buying what works is rational. Tags removed, scratchy seams avoided, fabrics softened. Layers rather than a single warm garment. Shoes that fit and do not pinch.
- **Information and predictability.** Headphones in for the journey. A downloaded route or backup map. A short list of where the quiet spaces are in regular venues. The pre-loaded alternative reduces the cost of the unexpected.

Home and out-of-capacity days

- **At home: lighting, sound, sleep, food.** Dimmable lamps rather than overhead lights. Blackout blinds in the bedroom. A quiet space you can reliably reach. Cool, dark, quiet bedroom. The right weight of bedding for you. A small reliable repertoire of safe foods. Pre-staged food where possible.
- **A genuine recovery space.** One room or corner that is yours, sensory-tuned to what you need, off-limits to other household demands when you need it. A do-not-disturb signal that the household respects.
- **For the days when the kit does not stretch.** Permission to leave early. A short script for excusing yourself ('I need to step out for a few minutes' works almost everywhere). A pre-agreed code with a partner or close friend for when you have hit your limit. A recovery plan after demanding events.
- **Where to get help.** For a structured sensory profile, an occupational therapist with sensory integration training is the right professional. Where the autism diagnostic picture is unclear, NeuroFX offers private adult autism assessment.

WHEN TO SPEAK TO A PROFESSIONAL

Speak to your GP if sensory difficulty is significantly affecting daily life, sleep, eating, work or relationships. Private adult autism assessment with a CQC-registered provider is a legitimate parallel route where the NHS wait is not workable. For a structured sensory profile, an OT with sensory integration training is the right professional. Seek urgent help via 111, 999 or A&E for any acute mental health crisis or significant safety concern.

SOURCES

Dunn Sensory Profile (2014); NICE CG142; DSM-5-TR; Royal College of Occupational Therapists; National Autistic Society

NEXT STEPS**Speak to NeuroFX**

Private ADHD and autism assessment for adults and children aged 6 and upwards.
CQC-registered. Bedford Consulting Rooms, 4 Goldington Road, Bedford MK40 3NF.

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