



ND Weekly Planner (Flexible & Forgiving)

Designed around rhythms, not rigid schedules.

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Important note

This resource is intended to support understanding and good practice in neuro-inclusive workplace design. It provides general guidance and does not constitute legal, medical, or clinical advice. Organisations should apply the principles in line with their own policies, regulatory obligations, and professional judgement.

A calm orientation

This is not a productivity planner.
It's not a time-blocking system.
It's not a way to "stay on track."

This planner exists to support **orientation, pacing, and nervous system safety** across a week... especially if:

- your energy fluctuates
- your focus is state-dependent
- strict schedules increase pressure or shutdown
- you've learned to override yourself to keep up

You do not need to use every section.
You do not need to plan the whole week.
You are allowed to change your mind midweek.

This planner is **forgiving by design**.

1. Why most weekly planners don't work for ND systems

Traditional planners assume:

- consistent energy
- predictable motivation
- stable focus
- linear time

Many neurodivergent nervous systems do not operate this way.

Instead, capacity is shaped by:

- regulation state
- recovery debt
- sensory load
- emotional demand
- relational stress
- meaning and relevance

So when a planner ignores these factors, it doesn't motivate...
it **creates shame**.

This planner is built on a different assumption:

**Your week is not something to control.
It's something to listen to.**

2. Rhythm over routine (the core reframe)

Routine says:

- “Do this every day at the same time.”

Rhythm says:

- “Notice when things are easier, harder, or unavailable.”

Rhythm allows for:

- ebb and flow
- variation
- rest without failure
- adjustment without guilt

This planner doesn't ask:

“What should I do each day?”

It asks:

“What kind of week is possible given my capacity?”

3. Step one: What kind of week is this?

(orientation before planning)

Before listing tasks, it helps to orient.

You might gently ask:

- Does this feel like a **low-capacity**, **medium-capacity**, or **high-capacity** week?
- Am I recovering from something, bracing for something, or in a steadier phase?
- Is my nervous system already carrying extra load?

You don't need to be precise.

A simple label is enough:

- “Recovery week”
- “Maintenance week”
- “Gentle momentum week”

This sets the **tone**... not the expectations.

4. Anchors, not schedules

Instead of fixed timetables, this planner uses **anchors**.

Anchors are:

- loose reference points
- stabilising elements
- things that support orientation

Examples of anchors:

- meals
- medication
- rest windows
- check-ins
- transitions (morning / evening)

You're not committing to *when* things happen.
You're noticing *what helps the day hold together*.

5. Weekly priorities (few, not many)

Instead of a long to-do list, choose:

- **1–3 priority areas** for the week

Not tasks... **areas**.

Examples:

- “Health admin”
- “Creative work”
- “Connection”
- “Rest and recovery”
- “Work maintenance”

This reduces the sense that everything matters equally.

If you do nothing else, these priorities help orient choice.

6. Capacity-aware task mapping

For each priority area, you might note:

- one **low-cost** task
- one **medium-cost** task
- one **optional / stretch** task

This acknowledges that:

- not all tasks cost the same
- capacity changes day to day
- doing the “easy” thing still counts

You are not required to do all three.

This is about **choice**, not completion.

7. Daily check-in (light, optional)

Instead of planning days in advance, this planner encourages **daily orientation**.

Each day, you might ask:

- How's my energy?
- How's my nervous system?
- What feels possible today... not ideal?

You can answer with:

- a word
- a symbol
- a colour
- or nothing at all

Planning *with* your state reduces friction dramatically.

8. The “could do / won't do” distinction

Many ND people carry tasks that silently drain them all week.

This planner makes space to name:

- **Things I could do**
- **Things I will intentionally not do this week**

Actively choosing *not* to do something:

- protects capacity
- reduces background guilt
- creates clarity

Not everything needs to be deferred quietly.

Some things need to be **released on purpose**.

9. Buffering and recovery (non-negotiable, non-moral)

Instead of treating rest as a reward, this planner treats it as:

- structural
- preventative
- necessary

You might note:

- recovery days
- low-demand evenings
- buffer time after hard things
- days where “nothing new” is the plan

Rest is not something you earn.

It's something your nervous system **requires to function**.

10. When plans change (because they will)

This planner assumes:

- plans will change
- energy will fluctuate
- unexpected things will happen

So the question is not:

“How do I stick to the plan?”

It’s:

“How do I reorient without self-attack?”

You might ask:

- What needs adjusting now?
- What can wait?
- What support do I need?

Flexibility is not failure.

It’s **responsiveness**.

11. A gentle weekly reflection

(optional, not evaluative)

At the end of the week, you might notice:

- What felt easier than expected?
- What cost more than expected?
- Where did rhythm help?
- Where did pressure creep in?

This is not about optimisation.

It’s about **learning your patterns** without judgement.

12. A soft template (copy, change, ignore)

You can use or adapt this:

This week feels like:

My main priorities:

Anchors that support me:

Low-cost tasks:

Medium-cost tasks:

Optional / stretch tasks:

Things I’m not doing this week:

Planned recovery or buffer:

Filling in one line is enough.

A closing permission

You do not need to have a “good week” to be okay.

You are allowed to:

- plan lightly
- change direction
- rest without explanation
- leave things undone
- prioritise safety over output

This planner is not here to make you more efficient.

It's here to help you move through time with **less friction and more self-trust...**
at the pace your nervous system can actually sustain.

Use what fits.
Leave the rest.

