

Micro-Start Method

Years 7–12 | Neurodivergence-Friendly Study Strategy

WHAT IS THE MICRO-START METHOD?

The micro-start method addresses task initiation — the difficulty of simply beginning a study task. Instead of committing to completing an assignment, you commit only to the smallest possible first action: opening the textbook, writing one sentence, or reading one paragraph. The goal is to cross the activation threshold with minimal resistance.

WHY DOES IT WORK? THE PSYCHOLOGY

- Task initiation challenges are common in ADHD and anxiety profiles. The activation energy required to start is often much higher than the energy needed to continue.
- Once started, momentum usually takes over — the "Zeigarnik Effect" means the brain naturally wants to complete tasks it has begun.
- Committing to something extremely small removes the perfectionism and overwhelm that trigger avoidance.
- Micro-starts also work for neurotypical students experiencing procrastination — the principle applies universally.

"You don't need to do the whole thing. You just need to start. Open the book. That's it. Go from there."

THE MICRO-START FORMULA

Level	What It Looks Like
Micro-Start Level 1	Physical setup: clear desk, get materials, sit down.
Micro-Start Level 2	Read only: open to the relevant page and read 1 paragraph.
Micro-Start Level 3	Write one thing: a single sentence, equation, or idea.
Micro-Start Level 4	Complete one unit: one question, one flashcard, one paragraph.
Continue	Once started, keep going as long as focus holds. Stop the timer.

MICRO-START SESSION LOG

Date:

Subject / Task:

My micro-start commitment (circle): Level 1 | Level 2 | Level 3 | Level 4

What exactly was my micro-start? (e.g. "I will read the first paragraph of Chapter 4"):

Time I started:

Time I stopped:

What did I actually get done this session? (be specific):

Barriers I noticed — what made it hard to start? (no judgement, just observation):

Remember

Getting started is the hardest part for many learners. A micro-start that leads to 5 minutes of work is infinitely more valuable than a plan to study for 3 hours that never begins.