

CHECKLIST: MY DAILY BASICS

When you're living in chaos, having a basic routine helps you maintain some control and take care of yourself. This checklist covers the minimum daily tasks that keep you functioning—things YOU can control regardless of what's happening in the rest of the house.

This is about survival and self-care, not perfection. Some days you'll do everything. Some days you'll do two things. Both are okay.

Morning Routine (10-15 minutes)

The goal: Start your day feeling somewhat in control

- ☐ **Wake up and get out of bed**
 - ☐ Set an alarm the night before if needed
 - ☐ Put your feet on the floor
 - ☐ **Modification:** If getting up is extremely hard, give yourself 5 minutes to transition
- ☐ **Make your bed (even roughly)**
 - ☐ Pull up the covers, smooth them out
 - ☐ Doesn't have to be perfect—just intentional
 - ☐ **Why this matters:** Immediate visual win, as the largest surface in your room looks organized
 - ☐ **Modification:** If you can't make the whole bed, just straighten your pillow and throw the duvet/comforter on top
- ☐ **Use the bathroom**
 - ☐ Empty bladder
 - ☐ Wash your face with water (or face wipes if access to water is limited)
 - ☐ **Modification:** If the bathroom is unusable, do what you can with what you have
- ☐ **Brush your teeth**
 - ☐ Brush for at least one minute if you can't do the full two minutes
 - ☐ Use mouthwash if brushing isn't possible
 - ☐ **Modification:** Keep supplies in your room if bathroom access is difficult
- ☐ **Get dressed in clean clothes**
 - ☐ Clothes that are clean enough for the day
 - ☐ Even if it's just changing your shirt
 - ☐ **Modification:** If clean clothes are limited, prioritize clean underwear and the layer closest to your body

☐ **Check your backpack/school bag**

- ☐ Do you have everything you need for the day?
- ☐ Homework, phone, charger, wallet, keys
- ☐ **Modification:** Keep a list on your phone of daily essentials to check

☐ **Eat something (even small)**

- ☐ Breakfast, snack, anything
- ☐ Food = fuel for your brain and body
- ☐ **Modification:** Keep shelf-stable items in your room (granola bars, crackers) if kitchen access is difficult, but be sure to keep them in sealed containers to prevent pests

☐ **Take any medications**

- ☐ If you have prescribed medications, take them
- ☐ Set a phone reminder if you forget easily
- ☐ **Modification:** It may help to keep your medication organized in a weekly pill organizer

☐ **Do one thing for your space**

- ☐ Throw away one piece of trash
- ☐ Put away one item
- ☐ Open a window for fresh air
- ☐ **This is optional but sets a positive tone**

☐ **Say one affirmation**

- ☐ Look in the mirror and say it out loud (or silently)
- ☐ "This is not my fault." "I can do hard things." Or any other affirmation that helps
- ☐ **Modification:** Think it instead of saying it if privacy is an issue

Optional: Midday Check-In (1 minute)

Do this if you're home during the day or between school/activities

☐ **How's my energy?**

- ☐ Use the scale from the [Energy Check-In exercise](#)
- ☐ Am I pushing too hard? Do I need rest?

☐ **Have I eaten/hydrated today?**

- ☐ Drink water
- ☐ Eat a snack if you're hungry

- ☐ **Do I need a reset?**
 - ☐ 2-minute meditation
 - ☐ Quick affirmation
 - ☐ Step outside for fresh air

After School/Evening Routine (15-20 minutes)

The goal: Transition from the day, reset for tomorrow, take care of yourself

- ☐ **Empty your backpack**
 - ☐ Take out trash, wrappers, papers you don't need (throw them away at school if getting trash out at home is a problem)
 - ☐ Put your homework in one place
 - ☐ Repack what you need for tomorrow
 - ☐ **Why this matters:** Prevents clutter buildup, keeps you organized
 - ☐ **Modification:** Do this sitting on your bed or at your desk—wherever is comfortable
- ☐ **Change out of your day clothes**
 - ☐ Into comfy clothes or pajamas
 - ☐ Signals to your brain: "The day is ending, and I can relax"
 - ☐ **Modification:** Even just taking off your shoes or your jacket counts
- ☐ **Put your dirty clothes in one place**
 - ☐ Hamper, bag, corner of your closet—wherever you've designated
 - ☐ Not on your bed or floor where you walk
 - ☐ **Why this matters:** Prevents your clothing piles from taking over
 - ☐ **Modification:** If laundry is overwhelming, at least keep your clean clothes separated from your dirty clothes
- ☐ **Eat dinner (or an evening meal)**
 - ☐ Whatever you have access to
 - ☐ Try to eat something with protein if possible
 - ☐ **Modification:** If family meals are stressful, it's okay to eat in your room when it's safe to do so
- ☐ **Take any evening medications**
 - ☐ If applicable
 - ☐ Set alarm as reminder

☐ **Do a 2-minute room check**

- ☐ Pick up any trash and put it in your room trash can (or sealed bag to take out later if getting trash out at home is difficult)
- ☐ Put items back in their “homes”
- ☐ Take any clothes off the bed and put them back in the closet or the dirty clothes pile
- ☐ **This is maintenance, not deep cleaning**
- ☐ **Modification:** If energy is low, just pick up trash. That’s enough.

☐ **Prep for tomorrow**

- ☐ Lay out or pick your clothes
- ☐ Pack your backpack
- ☐ Charge your phone
- ☐ Set your alarm
- ☐ **Why this matters:** Morning You will thank Evening You
- ☐ **Modification:** Even just setting your alarm counts

☐ **Do something that helps you decompress**

- ☐ Read, listen to music, watch something, text a friend
- ☐ Meditate for 2 minutes
- ☐ Journal
- ☐ **This is important—give yourself transition time**

☐ **Basic hygiene before bed**

- ☐ Brush your teeth (minimum)
- ☐ Wash your face if you can
- ☐ Use the bathroom if it’s accessible; if it’s not, work with what’s available
- ☐ **Modification:** Keep wipes in your room if bathroom access is limited at night

☐ **Get into bed at a reasonable time**

- ☐ Aim for 7-8 hours of sleep if possible
- ☐ Your brain and body need rest
- ☐ **Modification:** If your sleep schedule is chaotic, just try to be consistent within an hour

Weekly Add-Ons (When You Have the Energy)

These aren't daily, but they help maintain your baseline

- ☐ **Shower and/or wash your hair (2-3 times per week minimum)**
 - ☐ More if you can, less if your resources are limited
 - ☐ At a minimum: wash your body, change your underwear
- ☐ **Change bed sheets (once every week or two if possible)**
 - ☐ Wash at least your pillowcase; that gets exposed to a lot of face and hair oils
 - ☐ If washing sheets is hard, air them out
- ☐ **Take the trash out of your room (as often as possible)**
 - ☐ Don't let it build up
 - ☐ Take it to school to throw away if home disposal is a problem
- ☐ **Check in with your Calm Corner or other area if you have one**
 - ☐ Is it still clear?
 - ☐ Does it need a reset?
- ☐ **Do something social**
 - ☐ Text a friend
 - ☐ Spend time with someone who makes you feel good
 - ☐ Human connection matters

Troubleshooting

"I can't do all of this every day."

- You don't have to. These are ideals, not requirements. This list is just to remind you.
- Pick 3-5 things from each list that matter most
- Do those consistently, add others when you can

"I don't have access to a bathroom/shower/clean clothes."

- Do what you CAN do with what you HAVE
- Baby wipes, dry shampoo, deodorant can help when resources are limited
- Talk to school counselor about resources if hygiene is being affected

"My schedule is too chaotic for routines."

- Start with just ONE routine item morning and night
- Make your bed and brush your teeth = good enough
- Build from there as you can

“I’m too depressed/tired to do any of this.”

- On really hard days, the only requirement is: get up, brush your teeth, eat something
- That’s it. Everything else is extra.
- Be kind to yourself on low-energy days

“I skip days and then feel guilty.”

- Missing days doesn’t erase your progress
- Just start again the next day
- No guilt, no shame—just begin again

Accessibility Considerations

These routines assume certain physical and cognitive abilities. Adapt as needed: If standing for long periods is difficult, sit while getting ready. If executive function makes routines hard to remember, set phone alarms for each task or use a visual checklist. If depression makes basic tasks overwhelming, lower the bar—brushing teeth and drinking water might be your whole routine some days, and that’s okay. If you have limited access to bathroom/water, modify hygiene tasks to what’s possible (wipes, dry shampoo, etc.). If sensory issues make certain tasks difficult, find alternatives (different toothpaste, softer clothes, etc.). The goal is taking care of yourself within your abilities, not meeting an external standard.

Important Reminders

- **This is about taking care of YOU.** Not fixing the house, not managing others, just maintaining yourself.
- **Routines are flexible.** Adapt them to your reality, energy level, and resources.
- **Some days you’ll do 90% of this. Some days 20%.** Both are okay.
- **These are building blocks for your future.** When you have your own place, you’ll already have healthy daily habits.
- **You deserve to take care of yourself** even when your environment doesn’t support it.

Real Talk

Daily basics can be HARD AS HELL when you're living in a hoarded home.

Making your bed feels pointless when the rest of the house is chaos. Keeping clean clothes feels impossible when laundry is a nightmare. Having a routine feels laughable when everything is unpredictable.

Do it anyway.

Not because it fixes anything about your situation. But because these small acts of self-care are you saying: "I matter. My well-being matters. I'm worth taking care of."

Your parent might not be taking care of the house. But you can take care of yourself. Your corner of the chaos can be different.

Start with two things. Morning and night. That's enough.

Make your bed. Brush your teeth.

Build from there.

You're worth the effort.