



# THIS ISN'T JUST FOR KIDS: SENSORY SUPPORT FOR AUTISTIC ADULTS

## IF YOU FEEL OVERWHELMED EASILY, YOU'RE NOT IMAGINING IT

If certain sounds, lights, textures, or environments drain you faster than other people, there is a reason.

Your nervous system processes sensory input differently.

That can look like:

- Feeling overloaded in busy or noisy spaces
- Getting irritated or exhausted "out of nowhere"
- Needing movement, pressure, or repetition to feel okay
- Struggling to focus when your environment feels "off"

This is not a personal failure.

It is a sensory processing difference.

And it is something you can support.



## WHAT SENSORY REGULATION ACTUALLY MEANS

Sensory regulation is about helping your body feel:

- Safer
- More balanced
- Less overloaded or under-stimulated

You are not trying to eliminate your sensory needs.

You are learning how to meet them.

## START HERE: WHAT DOES YOUR BODY NEED?



You might notice patterns like:

- "I need quiet to think"
- "I focus better when I'm moving or fidgeting"
- "Pressure helps me calm down"
- "Bright light makes everything worse"

These are not random preferences. They are clues.

## THINGS YOU CAN TRY (BASED ON WHAT YOU NEED)

You do not need to do all of these.

Try what feels natural and build from there.

### IF YOU FEEL OVERWHELMED OR ANXIOUS

Deep pressure can help calm your system:

- Weighted blanket (best used in air-conditioned spaces; may be uncomfortable in hot or humid environments)
- Compression clothing (consider lighter fabrics in warm or humid climates)
- Wrapping yourself snugly in a blanket, without restricting breathing or movement
- Firm self-pressure (like pressing your hands together)

Tactile input can ground you:

- Stress balls or fidget tools
- Playdough or kinetic sand
- Textured fabrics



Repetitive motion helps regulate:

- Pacing
- Rocking
- Repetitive hand movements



### IF LIGHT OR VISUALS FEEL OVERWHELMING

- Sunglasses (even indoors if needed)
- Screen filters or reduced brightness
- Soft lighting instead of harsh overhead lights

For calming input:

- Slow, repetitive visuals (lava lamps, water, nature videos)
- Coloring or visually repetitive activities

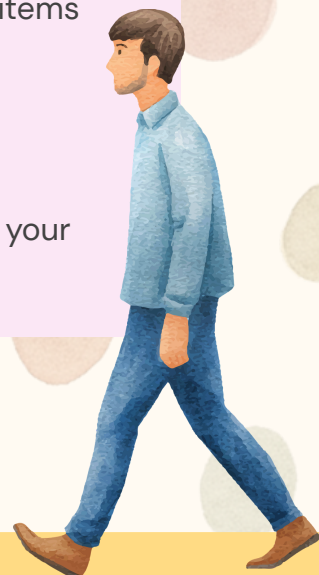


### IF YOU FEEL RESTLESS OR UNFOCUSED

Your body may need more input, not less.

- Fidget tools while working
- Chewing gum or chewy items
- Moving while thinking (walking, stretching)
- Listening to music while doing tasks

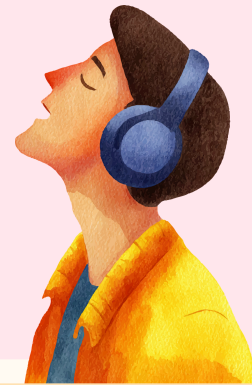
Focus often improves when your sensory needs are met.



### IF NOISE DRAINS YOU

- Noise-canceling headphones
- Earplugs
- White noise or steady background sound
- Music that feels predictable or familiar

You are allowed to control your sound environment.



## IF YOU FEEL DISCONNECTED FROM YOUR BODY

Proprioceptive input (body awareness) can help:

- Lifting weights or resistance exercises
- Pushing or pulling something heavy
- Yoga or slow stretching
- Pressing your feet firmly into the ground

This kind of input can feel organizing and stabilizing.



## IF YOU NEED CALMING ROUTINES

- Aromatherapy, only if scents feel calming and do not trigger headaches, nausea, asthma, allergies, or sensory discomfort
- Consistent “reset” activities (same music, same motion, same space)
- Creating a low-stimulation corner or environment
- Predictability helps your nervous system settle.



## A FEW THINGS THAT MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE

- You are allowed to look “different” while regulating
- Tools like headphones or fidgets are supports, not crutches
- Avoid pushing yourself into overwhelm just to seem “normal”
- Small adjustments can prevent bigger shutdowns later



## IF SOMETHING WORKS, IT MATTERS

Even if it seems small:

- Sitting in a certain position
- Wearing specific clothing
- Needing quiet
- Repeating movements

If it helps your body feel more stable, it is valid.



## YOU ARE NOT “TOO SENSITIVE”

You are responding accurately to your nervous system.

The goal is not to tolerate discomfort indefinitely.

The goal is to build a life where your environment works *with* you.