

# Decision paralysis

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Decision paralysis is an inability to make a decision due to overwhelm, fear of getting it wrong, or overanalysing the choices, regardless of how small the decision is. This can cause a significant emotional response and distress.

Decision paralysis is commonly experienced by those with ADHD or anxiety, which commonly co-occur with autism.

If you feel a sense of dread when faced with situations that require you to make decisions (such as going to a restaurant or getting groceries), or you find that you're often seeking input from others before making decisions, you may be experiencing decision paralysis.

Autistic people may form routines or schedules that link together or rely on different aspects. However, when decision paralysis comes in, it can impact a much larger part of the day. For example, you may need to eat before you can go to dance class. If you can't decide what to eat, you may not be able to eat and therefore may not be able to go to dance class.

Decision paralysis can consume a lot of time especially since there are so many decisions we make every day; what we're going to wear, eat, or do with our time or our hair and makeup, for example.

## Strategies for managing decision paralysis

- Flip a coin or roll a dice. Assign a number, heads or tails to each of your options and simply roll a dice or flip a coin to choose for you.
- Use an online wheel spinner. Put your options in and spin the wheel.
- Practice making small, unimportant decisions.
- Intentionally make the 'wrong' decision (with small things that would not be harmful) to help feel more okay with not always getting it perfect and see that, at least with small things, it doesn't matter if you get it wrong.
- Have a routine or schedule to minimise the number of decisions you need to make every day.
- Narrow down the options. If you have lots of things to choose from, try considering two at a time and narrow it down that way until you have only two options left.
- Write a pros and cons list.
- Reward yourself for progress and improvement.
- Have someone help break down choices.