



*GET THINGS
DONE WITH A
BODY DOUBLE:
GUIDE AND
WORKBOOK*

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GET THINGS DONE WITH A BODY DOUBLE

It's very common for neurodivergent folks to have trouble staying attentive to a task that is not interesting to us. Even when we are trying to focus on the things we have to do, it can be hard to keep on-task.

Some of the most common concerns are issues like:

- You didn't plan how to approach the project, so now it's hard to find a place to start.
- You didn't consider how much time the project will take, or have under- or overestimated how long it will take (sometimes drastically!).
- You got started and then forgot what your goal was.
- You got started and then got distracted with some other task.
- You got started and then got frustrated, and weren't able to talk yourself into persisting with the project.

Having an activity partner nearby can help with all of these situations.

What Is An Activity Partner?

You may have heard of an activity partner before; this person can also be called an activity buddy, a shadow, or a body double. The activity partner is another person whom you have with you while you perform your task.

How you use an activity partner is up to you. In most cases, your partner can sit with you quietly, perhaps reading or working on their own task while you work on yours. I've also had success having a partner "be" with me over the phone or over video on the computer, if they're unable to be in the same space with me. Ideally, your partner will be able to see and/or hear you for the majority of the time you've devoted to your project.

Sometimes, it's more helpful for a partner to be more active in supporting you through your task. They can offer physical or verbal reminders of your intentions and goals, help you talk through a problem, or split the task with you to make it go faster. This will all depend on what you are trying to do and where you need the most support.

How Can An Activity Partner Help You?

There are a lot of different way to have an activity partner help you, either actively or passively, through a difficult project. Here are some of the biggest advantages:

- 1) Having another person nearby, either physically or emotionally on the phone, can help you feel less isolated and less bored as you attempt a difficult task.
- 2) Knowing that someone else is in the room with you can keep you more focused on what you're meant to be doing, because you have a constant reminder in that person.
- 3) The body double represents your commitment to achieving your task. Moving off-task would involve justifying that decision to your double, which is often harder than justifying that decision to ourselves.
- 4) A body double is giving their time to you to help you with your task, so you will be more motivated to complete it.
- 5) Your partner can model calm, relaxation, and focus to you while working on their own task, helping you stay regulated in your body and focused on your work.
- 6) A body double can remind you why you chose to do this task and what the benefit is of completing it.
- 7) A partner can help you physically do a task that may be easy for them but challenging for you, or can help you do one portion of your task while you take on another piece.
- 8) If you get stuck or overwhelmed in your task and are not sure what to do next, a partner can help you bounce ideas and think through your next step, and start you off on it before returning to their own work.



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USING A BODY DOUBLE EFFECTIVELY

Asking yourself the following questions about a particular task can help you decide whether you need a Body Double and who that person might be.

1) Plan the Project:

What is your overall, long-term goal for this project?

How will you know that this project is complete?

What are the big-picture steps you need to take to get to that version of "complete"?

2) Plan today:

What are you trying to accomplish right now, in the time you committed today?

Would having another person there with you support you through these challenges? How?

3) What Do You Want From Your Double?

Do you want a partner to sit quietly with you or to actively help you in some way? What specific help would they offer?

Do you want to be in charge and delegate tasks, or do you want your double to be in charge and delegate to you? Or neither?

Do you want a partner to offer verbal cues or stay silent?

- What should they say?
- What shouldn't they say?

4) Sourcing A Body Double

Should you borrow a friend or hire an assistant?

There are pros and cons to each option.

- A friend or family member may be more familiar, which can make you more comfortable.
- They'll work for free!
- But they may take the job less seriously.
- Or, they may disagree with how you've structured your task and try to take over.

- Hiring someone can be a process, but also a great choice.
- If you're paying them to work with you, you're even more likely to be motivated, stay on task, and track time well.
- A hired helper should also be non-confrontational, non-judgmental, and committed to supporting you to complete your task in whatever way works for you.
- Some organizational coaches or life coaches are available for this kind of work, but most tasks don't really require their expertise.
- Hiring a personal assistant, household assistant, or office assistant is usually more helpful in the long-term (with maybe a coach to check in with occasionally, for any large-scale or deeply overwhelming projects).

Make sure you choose someone you communicate well with, who can be respectful and non-judgmental about your process.

Who are some people you know who might be awesome body doubles?



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Looking for group support?

Neurodiverging Coaching's Get Stuff Done group uses the well-known (and evidence-based) intervention of body doubling to encourage you to show up, set a goal, and spend an hour or two getting it done.

With group coaching support available from a certified coach, and a group of other humans cheering you on, you'll feel less overwhelmed and make clear forward progress on your goals.

How It Works

1 - Join our membership at [Patreon.com/neurodiverging](https://www.patreon.com/neurodiverging) for full access to our body doubling group for \$5/month.

You'll have 7 days to try out the group and explore the rest of the Patreon. If it's not a fit for you, cancel easily on Patreon before Day 7 and you won't be charged.

(Email us at contact@neurodiverging.com for scholarship opportunities if needed.)

2 - Show up.

Once you're on Patreon, follow the directions to join us on Discord, and we'll meet you there!

Want to learn more? Check out

<https://www.neurodiverging.com/neurodivergent-body-doubling-meetings/>.

About Neurodiverging

I'm Danielle Sullivan, an autistic certified coach and parent of two neurodivergent kids living in Colorado.

I founded Neurodiverging in March of 2020 after perceiving a higher need for personal and educational resources for families with a mix of neurotypical and neurodivergent people.



My mission is to help neurodiverse folks find the resources they need to live better lives as individuals, and to further disability awareness and social justice efforts to improve all of our lives as part of the larger world community.

Listen to the Neurodiverging podcast wherever you stream your podcasts, and learn more at <https://neurodiverging.com>.

Contact:

At Neurodiverging Coaching, we support personal development, life skills development, and communication through a solution-focused, evidence-based approach. Schedule a free 20 minute discovery call to learn more today!

<https://neurodiverging.com/life-coaching/>

Questions, comments, suggestions? Please email me at contact@neurodiverging.com.