

RESTARTERY

The Restart Protocol

Why planners get abandoned — and how this one is built for it.

Built to be restarted.

Read this first

This guide is short on purpose, and you don't need it to start. If you'd rather just begin: open the planner, read the one-page “How This Works,” and fill in today's page. Total setup time: none.

This guide is for two moments. The first is when you want to know why the planner is built the way it is — because “designed for how you actually work” is a claim you've heard before, and you deserve to see the reasoning, not just the label. The second is the day you come back after time away and want your footing before you open the planner again.

One thing to be clear about up front: this is an organization tool, not a treatment for anything. It won't change how your brain works. It's built to stop punishing you for how your brain works — that's the entire project.

Why planners get abandoned

Spend any time where adults with ADHD talk honestly about planners — review threads, comment sections, forum posts — and the same story repeats: a planner bought with total conviction, used brilliantly for one to three weeks, then abandoned. Half empty. Then another one. The graveyard drawer.

The usual explanation is a willpower story: you didn't stick with it. The evidence says otherwise. The same person abandons planner after planner in the same handful of ways, which means the failure is a pattern — and patterns point at design. Four show up over and over:

1 • Setup burden — abandoned before day one

Many systems ask for an evening of work before they do anything for you: writing in dates, configuring sections, migrating tasks from the last system, watching the tutorial. That's a tax charged, in full, at the exact moment your motivation is highest — and it spends the motivation the planner was supposed to harness. People report giving up before finishing setup. The planner failed before it started.

2 • Dated pages — guilt printed in advance

A dated planner turns one skipped day into a permanent, visible record of absence. Skip a week and there are seven blank accusations between you and today. For anyone with a perfectionist streak, a spoiled page kills the whole book — the planner is “ruined,” so it goes in the drawer. The empty pages were doing the planner's marketing in reverse.

3 • Overwhelm — every page is a decision

The category sells on abundance: hundreds of templates, trackers for water and mood and habits and meals, stickers, dashboards. But every option is a decision, and decisions are the expensive

part of a hard day. A tool that offers forty things to fill in is, on the wrong day, a tool with forty ways to feel behind. People say it directly: too much choice, a chore in itself.

4 · Invisibility — closed means gone

A planner that lives shut in a bag, or inside an app behind a lock screen, stops existing between uses. The most repeated wish in the whole conversation is a system that sits in front of your face. Visibility isn't a nice-to-have; for many people it's the entire difference between a system and a souvenir.

None of these are character flaws. They're design flaws. A planner that only works when maintained daily, in order, forever, was designed for someone else — and then sold to you.

What this system leaves out

The Restart System is built backwards from those four failures. Most of the design work went into removing things:

- **No dates.** Every page is undated, so a skipped day — or month — leaves no evidence and costs nothing. There is no “behind.”
- **No setup.** There is nothing to configure. The manual is one page. You can be using a daily page ninety seconds after opening the file.
- **No monthly or yearly spreads.** Long-range spreads are where dated guilt compounds quietly. The system plans a day and a week — the two horizons you actually operate in.
- **No streaks.** Progress is a running total of days used. Totals only go up. There is nothing to break.
- **No feature sprawl.** A daily page asks for at most three priorities — and says, in print, that one is fine. The planner with less in it, on purpose.

And one thing deliberately added: a designed way back in. Every planner gets abandoned sometimes — this one is the only part of your setup that expects it. That's the re-entry page.

How the re-entry flow works

“Start Here (Again)” is one page, three questions, about five minutes. It exists because the hardest moment in any planner's life isn't day one — it's day one *again*, after a gap. Here's what each question is doing:

Question 1 · What actually matters right now?

Start Here (Again)

So you've been away. Good — that was always part of the plan. This page is the system working, not you failing. Five minutes, three questions, and you're back.

THE ONE RULE

Do not review missed days. Don't count them, don't reread them, don't catch up. Old pages are dead pages — this planner starts today.

1 • What actually matters right now?

This week, not this life. Two minutes.

2 • What's the next physical action on that?

Small enough to start in two minutes. "Open the folder" counts. One minute.

3 • When will you look at this planner next — and where will it live so you can see it?

Visibility beats discipline. Name a spot in your eyeline. Two minutes.

That's it. You're restarted. Turn to any blank daily page — and mark one tally on the Days Used page if you want the credit. You've earned it in the only way this system counts: you showed up today.