



If you're dealing with sensory issues daily, you're definitely not alone. Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD) is about how your brain interprets things like sounds, textures, lights, and even food. Sometimes we crave certain types of sensory input, and sometimes we need to avoid certain types.



1. Reassess Visual Stimuli

Look around the spaces where you spend most of your time. Are they cluttered or too busy? That might be adding to your stress. Try simplifying your surroundings. Also, consider the lighting—bright fluorescent lights can feel like a visual assault. Switch to softer, warm lighting if you can. And yes, sunglasses aren't just for sunny days; they can be a lifesaver for blocking out intense light.

Certain types of stores or places may have lighting that can trigger you. You can wear sunglasses indoors. No judgment.

EXAMPLE:

- Think of a room as a blank canvas. Too much stuff on it can make the art look chaotic. Simplifying the space helps calm the mind.



2. Noise Canceling Headphones



You don't need to be at a loud event to make good use of noise-canceling headphones. They're great for everyday environments—home, school, busy stores, or even work. They help filter out background noise that can sometimes feel like nails on a chalkboard. If noise is a problem at work or school, talk about potential accommodations including noise canceling headphones.



3. Make a Quiet Space

Creating a quiet retreat for yourself can be a game-changer. Think of it as your "calm-down corner." Load it up with comforting things like a weighted blanket, noise-canceling headphones, or fidget toys. This is your personal sanctuary. It can even be your bed if that feels like your safe place.

4. Expand Food Options

If you or your child have issues with food textures, you're not alone. Pay attention to the textures you already like. Maybe you're into crunchy stuff like chips, or prefer smooth things like yogurt. Use this as a base to explore other foods with similar textures. The key is to introduce new foods gradually, without pressure.

REAL-LIFE SCENARIO:

- If you're a fan of crunchy snacks, try introducing other crunchy veggies like carrot sticks. It's about finding new foods that fit your current texture preferences.

5. Bird Baths

Not everyone enjoys the feeling of showers or baths. If that's you, it's time to get creative with hygiene. Consider using textured washcloths or opting for alternative soaps like unscented, liquid, or natural options. Washing your hair in the sink instead of the shower can also help if you don't like water on your face.

6. Tactile Issues

Certain textures can be a real challenge. If that's the case, consider wearing gloves. They're a simple fix for things like food prep, cooking, or cleaning without feeling like you have to touch every uncomfortable surface directly.



7. Reassess Sleep

Sensory triggers can totally mess with your sleep. Sometimes, it's the little things—like a wrinkle in the sheets or tags on your pajamas. Experiment with different bedding options, like softer sheets or smoother pillowcases. And seriously, avoid eating in bed—crumbs are the worst.



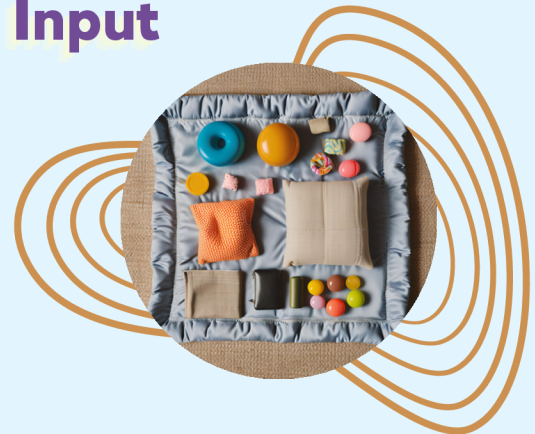
8. Plan Ahead

Public places can be the worst. Grocery shopping on a busy Saturday? Nope. Go for a weird time on a weekday that no one is there. If you need to use instacart or doordash, it can be worth the fee to avoid the stress.



9. Resources for Sensory Input

Sensory issues aren't just about avoiding triggers. You might also need certain sensory inputs to feel balanced. Some people benefit from chewing gum or using fidget toys. Weighted blankets or vests can offer comforting pressure. You could also experiment with essential oils or different textured snacks.



10. Consider Occupational Therapy

Occupational therapists can be a real asset. They're trained to identify your sensory triggers and teach personalized coping strategies. Whether you're an adult dealing with this or a parent looking for support for your child, an OT can create a plan tailored just for you.

REAL-LIFE INSIGHT:

- An OT can be like your sensory guide, helping you navigate and manage your sensory environment more effectively.