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Sample report

Mind Excessively Wandering Scale (MEWS)

Neurodevelopmental self-assessment

Test	Date	Questions	Reference
Mind wandering (MEWS)	**November 23, 2026**	**15**	**000000B2**

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This report is a self-assessment tool. It is not a medical or psychological diagnosis.

Your result

22 / 45

Excessive mind wandering: at or above the published cut-off

49 % of the maximum score



Your score is 15 or more, the cut-off proposed by the authors of the MEWS. In their validation studies (Mowlem et al., 2019), about 9 in 10 adults with ADHD reached it, against about 1 in 10 adults without ADHD. These figures come from small samples: 157 adults in London, compared only with control groups, not with people who have other conditions. Mind wandering is also high in anxiety and depression, where it can take the form of worry or rumination, and the authors do not yet recommend using the scale routinely to identify ADHD. Your result describes a restless, hard-to-switch-off flow of thoughts; it is not an ADHD diagnosis.

What your answers say

Written by Claude (Anthropic) from your answers.

A Busy Mind, Above the Cut-off

Thank you for taking the time to answer these questions about your inner world. Describing what happens inside your own head is not easy, and the picture you have drawn here deserves to be taken seriously. Your total score is 22 out of 45, which places you at or above the published cut-off of 15. In plain terms, you reported a level of spontaneous mind wandering that is higher than what this questionnaire treats as typical.

This is a self-assessment questionnaire, not a clinical diagnosis. It cannot tell you why your thoughts behave this way, and it does not identify any condition. It simply describes an experience that many people live with quietly: a mind that rarely seems to rest.

Where 22 Sits on This Scale

The Mind Excessively Wandering Scale looks at your inner experience rather than your behaviour. It does not ask whether you fidget or lose your keys. It asks whether your thoughts are constantly on the go, jump from topic to topic, run in parallel, and are hard to switch off. Its 15 items were built from the way adults attending an ADHD clinic described their own thinking. Each item is scored from 0 to 3, and none is reversed.

The cut-off of 15 was the best dividing point in two small London studies comparing adults with ADHD to control groups. In those samples, average scores were 25.0 and 27.7 for the ADHD groups and 4.8 and 7.2 for the controls. Your score of 22 is well above those control averages. This comparison describes how intense your reported mind wandering is. It is not a probability of anything, and it does not place you in any group.

A Mind Running Several Tracks

The clearest pattern in your answers is consistency. Seven items received the same answer, "most of the time", and together they describe one coherent experience. You reported that your thoughts are "on the go" most of the time and that you experience ceaseless mental activity most of the time. This is the backdrop: a mind that keeps moving.

On top of that, you reported having two or more different thoughts going on at the same time, and flitting back and forth between thoughts, both most of the time. So the activity is not only constant, it is also split and shifting.

The final piece is the effect this has. You said that most of the time you have difficulty controlling your

thoughts, find it hard to slow them down and focus on one thing, and find they distract you from what you are doing. Your answers move from how your mind works to what it costs you, and that link is worth bringing to a professional.

How This Can Show Up Day to Day

At work or in studies, this pattern can mean reading the same paragraph several times because another thought keeps cutting in. A meeting may be harder to follow when a second line of thinking runs alongside it. Tasks that need sustained attention, such as writing a report or checking details, may take more effort than they appear to take for others.

At home, a mind that stays on the go can make it harder to unwind in the evening or to stay with a film or a conversation. The scale includes items about falling asleep, using music as a distraction, and alcohol or other drugs, because people sometimes describe these as ways of coping with busy thoughts.

In relationships, loved ones may sometimes notice that you seem elsewhere even when you are present. That is not a lack of care. It can simply be that your attention is pulled inward.

There can be another side too. Holding several thoughts at once may sometimes bring quick connections between ideas or a lively inner life. The goal is not to empty your mind but to have more say in where it goes.

What Else Can Shape This Score

An online self-assessment has clear limits. Your answers reflect how you see yourself, and a score can shift with mood, stress, sleep or the period of life you are in. The scale has no fixed time frame, so a demanding few weeks may weigh on your answers. The studies behind the cut-off were small and compared people with ADHD only to control groups, and the authors do not yet recommend using this scale on its own to identify ADHD. They also later suggested a 12–item version, leaving aside the three coping items.

Excessive mind wandering is not specific to one condition. It is also raised in anxiety, in depression, where thoughts may circle as rumination, and in borderline personality disorder. Poor sleep, ongoing stress and heavy demands on attention can also make thoughts feel harder to steer.

A professional would look well beyond this number. They would ask when this pattern began, whether it has been present since childhood, how it affects different areas of your life, and whether your thoughts tend to be worried, low, or simply restless. That fuller picture is what turns a score into understanding.

Gentle Steps Forward

You can start by noticing your mind with curiosity rather than judgement. For a week, jot down when your thoughts feel most crowded and when they feel calmer. Patterns linked to time of day, sleep or particular tasks can be very useful to share later.

It may also help to give your thoughts somewhere to land. Keeping a notebook nearby to park passing ideas can ease the pull of several thoughts at once. Working in short, clearly defined blocks with one task in view can also help.

Because your score is above the cut-off and you described real effects on your focus, it would be worthwhile to complete the adult ADHD questionnaire on this site and then speak with a psychiatrist or psychologist trained in adult ADHD. A conversation with someone experienced can help you make sense of your busy mind and explore what support fits you best.

Next steps

Pick one or two. Regularity matters more than duration.

Racing thoughts

Park thoughts in a notebook

Keep a small notebook or notes app open while you work and write down any passing thought in a few words. Tell yourself you will come back to it later, then return to the task.

A few seconds, whenever a thought intrudes

Focusing on one thing

Work in short single-task blocks

Choose one task, set a timer for 20 minutes and close other tabs and apps. When the timer ends, take a short break before the next block.

20 min blocks, 2 to 4 times a day

Thought control

Name and return practice

When you notice your mind has jumped, silently label it 'wandering' and gently bring your attention back to your breath or task. Treat each return as practice, not failure.

5 min, once a day

Ceaseless mental activity

Scheduled thinking time

Set aside a fixed slot to let your thoughts run freely and write them out. Outside that slot, remind yourself that these thoughts have a time and place.

10 min, once a day

Winding down

Evening brain dump before bed

An hour before sleep, write down everything on your mind, including tasks for tomorrow. Then switch to a calm, low-stimulation activity.

10 min, every evening

Self-observation

Track your busiest moments

Each evening, note when your thoughts felt most crowded and what you were doing, how you slept and your stress level. Bring these notes to a professional appointment.

3 min, daily for 2 weeks

To talk about it with a professional

Psychiatrist or psychologist trained in adult ADHD: this report can start the conversation.

- Bring page 2 (result by dimension).
- Note one or two situations that were hard for you lately.
- Say what you would like to change, even vaguely.

Need to talk to someone now? Call Suicide & Crisis Lifeline on **988**, or 911 in an emergency.

This report is a self-assessment tool. It does not replace an assessment by a professional. For a diagnosis or a full assessment, see a qualified professional: psychiatrist or psychologist trained in adult ADHD.

Prepare your appointment

Psychiatrist or psychologist trained in adult ADHD: bring this page. Fill it in a few days before, when examples come to mind.

My key figures

Mind Excessively Wandering Scale (MEWS) · 22 / 45 (49 %) · Excessive mind wandering: at or above the published cut-off

Test taken on November 23, 2026 · reference 000000B2

Examples from my daily life

Work or studies, home, relationships: two or three concrete situations, with what happened.

Since when?

Was it already there in childhood or adolescence? School reports or a relative's memories can help.

What I would like to change

Even vaguely: what costs you the most energy today.

Questions I can ask

- ☐ Is a full assessment useful in my case, and with whom?
- ☐ How long is the wait, and what can I do in the meantime?
- ☐ Could something else explain this (sleep, stress, thyroid, another condition)?
- ☐ What support exists, at work or in my studies?
- ☐ What should I bring next time?

Your answers

Scale from “Not at all or rarely” to “Nearly all of the time or constantly”.

#	Question	Your answer	Pts
1	I have difficulty controlling my thoughts	Most of the time	**2**
2	I find it hard to switch my thoughts off	Some of the time	**1**
3	I have two or more different thoughts going on at the same time	Most of the time	**2**
4	My thoughts are disorganised and ‘all over the place’	Some of the time	**1**
5	My thoughts are ‘on the go’ all the time	Most of the time	**2**
6	Because my mind is ‘on the go’ at bedtime, I have difficulty falling off to sleep	Some of the time	**1**
7	I experience ceaseless mental activity	Most of the time	**2**
8	I find it difficult to think about one thing without another thought entering my mind	Some of the time	**1**
9	I find my thoughts are distracting and prevent me from focusing on what I am doing	Most of the time	**2**
10	I try to distract myself from my thoughts by doing something else or listening to music	Some of the time	**1**
11	I have difficulty slowing my thoughts down and focusing on one thing at a time	Most of the time	**2**
12	I find it difficult to think clearly, as if my mind is in a fog	Some of the time	**1**
13	I find myself flitting back and forth between different thoughts	Most of the time	**2**
14	I use alcohol or other drugs to slow down my thoughts and stop constant ‘mental chatter’	Some of the time	**1**
15	I can only focus my thoughts on one thing at a time with considerable effort	Some of the time	**1**

MEWS: Mowlem F. D., Skirrow C., Reid P., Maltezos S., Nijjar S. K., Merwood A., Barker E., Cooper R., Kuntsi J., Asherson P. (2019), Journal of Attention Disorders 23(6):624–634, doi:10.1177/1087054716651927. © The Author(s) 2016, licence CC BY 3.0: https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/. Original English items and answer labels, unchanged.