

The Runner

Processing Speed

About The Runner:

The Runner is super speedy, and helps your brain work fast. Imagine someone zooming about with messages, helping all the other bits of your brain talk to each other. That's the Runner's job! They're kind of like a delivery person in a big city. The Runner doesn't decide what needs to be done, but they make sure it gets done faster!

When your Runner gets tripped up

If your Runner needs some help, you might:

- Take longer to finish work, even when you know how to do it
- People talk too fast. By the time you're ready to say something, they've already moved on.
- You get lost in lessons. You understand the start, but if teacher goes too fast you get confused.
- Feel rushed, like everyone else is zooming ahead before you're ready
- Lose track of what is going on and feel a bit lost
- You make mistakes because you're trying to go faster than your brain wants to
- You feel upset when others finish their work and you're still halfway through
- Feels like your brain is running through sticky mud. You're trying your best, but it is hard to go fast.

What you can do to help your Runner

- Go at your own speed. Rushing can make your Runner trip! It's better to do a small bit of work really well than a big bit with lots of mistakes
- Ask for extra time. If you feel you're falling behind, it's okay to ask for more time
- Stay calm. If you get upset or worried, your Runner will slow down even more. Take deep breaths and be kind to yourself
- Use helpful tools. Things like typing on a computer, speaking instead of writing, or looking at notes can make things easier
- Remember: Slow doesn't mean silly. Your Runner just needs time to deliver the message
- Practice. The more you do it the faster your Runner gets, just like training for a race
- Break jobs into little bits. Even if you don't feel everything you can still feel proud of the parts you did do
- Do the important stuff first. If you don't have time for everything, focus on the most important bits
- Take short breaks. If your Runner feels tired, let them rest a few minutes, then they'll be ready to go again

Make sure the person is ready to learn these strategies. Remember, not every strategy works for everyone. When unsure, focus on what **you** can do to support the person

What other people can do to help your Runner

Give more time, or less work

- They will need either less work to do in the same time as their peers, or more time to do the same work as their peers.
- Make sure they will be able to finish their task. It can be really upsetting seeing everyone else always finish when you don't.
- If they haven't managed to do their work in the time you gave them, don't ask them to finish it in their own time. If they do this for everything, they won't have enough time to rest.
- Break tasks up into smaller bits. Being able to finish each bit can be a small win, and help them feel success and keep motivated
- Prioritise work. If they can only do some bits, which are the most important bits?
- Focus on quality of work, not quantity
- Don't rush them – it makes it harder to focus and increases mistakes.
- Give praise for effort, focus, and strategies used, not just speed or finished work

Communicate clearly

- Don't speak too quickly – wait a beat before you start a new point or sentence
- Give clear, simple instructions. We often say more than we need to, which gives them more to process. Keep it simple and to the point so it is quicker to process.
- Give them time to process what you've said. Often if someone doesn't respond right away we rephrase, thinking they haven't understood us. However, if they are still processing, and then we rephrase, then we've just given them even MORE to process! Try counting to 7 before you rephrase or ask them a follow up question. It might feel uncomfortable but it is really important to give them time
- Ask them to repeat back instructions or information in their own words. This checks they caught all you said

Practical changes

- Make sure people know **how** they ask for help. Remember – this might not be with words
- Let them see work in advance so they can start thinking early
- Reduce or get rid of less important parts of the task. For example – do they need to copy information down, or could you give them a handout? Do they need to make the shopping list from scratch, or can the staples you need every week just be added automatically?
- Let them use alternatives to writing (e.g speech-to-text, drawing, bullet points)
- Give them short, regular breaks
- Build a regular routine. The more practiced they are at doing something every day, the faster they'll get.
- Think about the family routine. If they need more time to get dressed, to eat a meal, etc, then you need to give more time in the routine for this. Otherwise, you will feel frustrated you're running late, and they will feel frustrated they are being rushed.

Make sure the person is ready to learn these strategies. Remember, not every strategy works for everyone. When unsure, focus on what **you** can do to support the person