

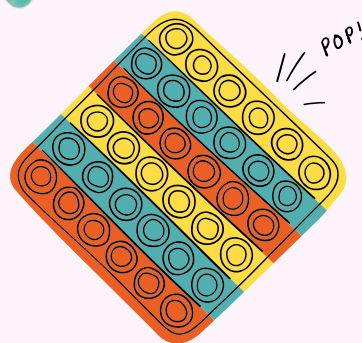


Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin



Fidgets for the Socially Conscious:

The Stylish and Subtle Tools to Boost Focus



Introduction



Declan Treanor

disAbility Service Director
Trinity disAbility Hub
Printing House Square
Trinity College Dublin



In the vast tapestry of human behaviour, fidgeting often goes unnoticed, or worse, dismissed as an insignificant or distracting action. In our pursuit of conformity and uniformity, society tends to amplify behaviours that stand out, casting them in a light that makes them seem 'different' or 'other'. For neurodivergent individuals, whose fidgeting may be more pronounced or frequent, this spotlight can be particularly glaring.

Such behaviours, instead of being seen as a natural part of the human spectrum, are sometimes misinterpreted as signs of inattention or nervousness.

By doing so, we inadvertently stigmatise a behaviour that, in reality, is as common as breathing. This stigmatisation not only overshadows the potential benefits of fidgeting but also creates unnecessary barriers for neurodivergent individuals, fostering feelings of isolation and difference where there should be understanding and acceptance. It's time we shift our perspective and recognise fidgeting not as an anomaly but as a shared, intrinsic part of our human experience. This booklet delves into the fascinating world of fidgeting, exploring its origins, its myriad manifestations, and its surprising benefits.

We invite you to journey with us, discovering why, despite our varied lives and stories, this simple act of movement unites us all. So, whether you're a habitual hair twirler, a nail-biter, or someone who can't resist clicking that pen, remember: you're not alone. Everyone fidgets. Let's explore why.

Author

Declan Treanor

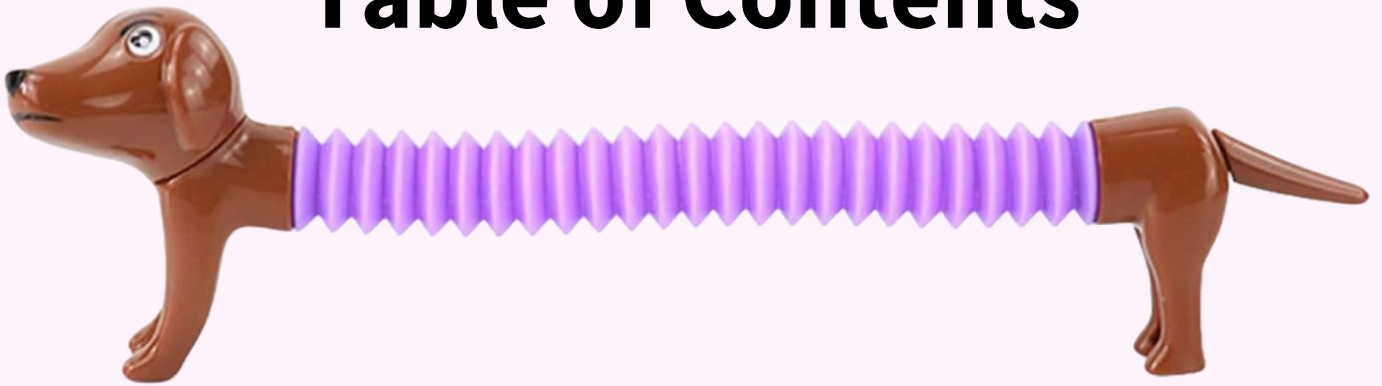
Trinity disAbility Service Director



Fidget Tools Aren't Just Hype

It is so interesting that everyone fidgets. In an age where personal style and social consciousness go hand in hand, today's students are consistently on the lookout for tools and accessories that not only aid them academically but also resonate with their identity. Enter fidget tools – discreet, stylish, and increasingly embraced by the academically inclined. Welcome to the world of fidget tools – where style meets functionality for neurodivergent students. These ingenious gadgets are like the Swiss Army knives of concentration aids, designed to keep restless fingers busy and minds on track. But here's the twist: they're not just useful; they're also sleek and discreet, blending seamlessly into your daily routine.

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1. What are Fidget Tools?



Fidget tools or toys are typically small, handheld devices designed to help people, particularly those with anxiety, ADHD, or Autism, to channel their restless energy. This can improve concentration, reduce anxiety, and offer a sensory outlet in high-pressure situations.



You know those times when it's tough to sit still or concentrate? Well, fidget tools are here to save the day! They come in all sorts of shapes, like spinners, squishies, or clickers. When you use them, it can help you focus better and feel more relaxed. Fidget tools are like your secret sidekick, and they're not just for fun – they're also super helpful for neurodivergent students. So, if you ever find yourself needing a little extra help staying on track, try out a fidget toy. They're like your very own superpower for staying calm and focused!



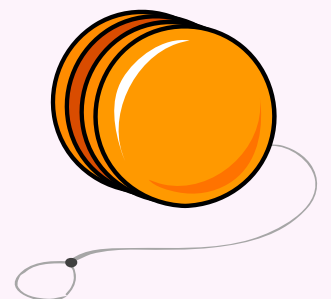
2. The New Era of Fidgets

Gone are the days when fidget tools were solely plastic spinners. Today, they have evolved to incorporate a wide array of designs that can effortlessly blend with a student's personal style. From minimalist metal rollers to stylish geometric cubes and even jewelry-like fidget rings, there's a fidget for every fashion statement.



Now, there are fidget tools that are more sophisticated than your average PowerPoint presentation. These sleek and stylish gadgets are designed to keep your wandering mind on track while adding a dash of flair to your daily grind.

Other types of Fidgets include mindful colouring, learning to use a yoyo, doodling using only a protractor and a ruler. You can make your own perfectly symmetrical monochrome images using only a ruler, a protractor and a black gel pen.



3. Why Every Student Should Consider a Fidget

Even for students who don't identify with ADHD or anxiety, the act of fidgeting can:

- **Boost Concentration:** Research has shown that slight physical activity, like tapping a foot or doodling, can increase the levels of neurotransmitters in the brain, promoting alertness and concentration.
- **Reduce Stress:** The repetitive motion can act as a calming mechanism, much like rocking a baby or using a stress ball.
- **Enhance Memory Retention:** Some studies suggest that when our hands are busy, our minds are better at processing information.



4. Navigating the Social Terrain with Fidgets

Being socially conscious means being aware of and sensitive to the complex interplay of social dynamics, personal identities, and the needs of oneself and others. For students who pride themselves on this, fidgets can be:

- **A Conversation Starter:** A unique fidget tool can be a gateway to discussions about mental health, learning strategies, or even design aesthetics.
- **A Means of Advocacy:** By using and normalizing fidget tools, students can create an environment where everyone feels free to use whatever tools they need to succeed academically.
- **A Statement Piece:** With designers increasingly recognizing the need for stylish fidget tools, many are now doubling as jewelery or keychain accessories.



5. Tips for Choosing the Right Fidget

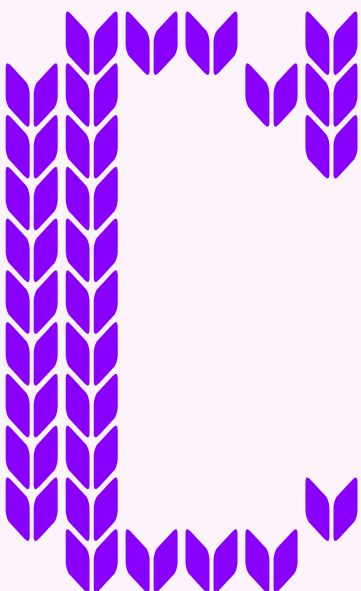
Being socially conscious means being aware of and sensitive to the complex interplay of social dynamics, personal identities, and the needs of oneself and others. For students who pride themselves on this, fidgets can be:

- **Function First:** Determine the type of motion or sensation that's most soothing. Is it rolling, spinning, flipping, or pressing?
- **Style Statement:** Choose a design and material that resonates with personal aesthetics, whether it's metallic chic, boho wood, or colourful silicone.
- **Discreet or Bold:** Decide if the fidget tool should blend in or stand out. Some may prefer a fidget that melds seamlessly with their attire, while others might choose one that sparks curiosity.
- **Texture Matters:** When selecting an autism fidget toy, pay attention to the texture. Some autistic individuals may have sensory preferences, so choose a toy with a texture that provides comfort and sensory stimulation. It could be smooth, bumpy, or even squishy, depending on the individual's sensory needs.

Joanna's Sensory Symphony: Crafting Calm Through Crochet

In a cosy corner of her sunlit room, surrounded by skeins of vibrant yarn, sat Joanna, deeply engrossed in the rhythmic dance of her crochet hook. Each movement was a meditative mantra, weaving together not just threads, but also moments of peace and reflection.

Joanna had always felt the world a bit more intensely than others. Sounds were louder, lights brighter, and emotions more profound. This heightened sensitivity often left her overwhelmed, especially during the tumultuous years of college. While others found solace in music, art, or sports, Joanna stumbled upon her refuge in an unexpected place - crochet.

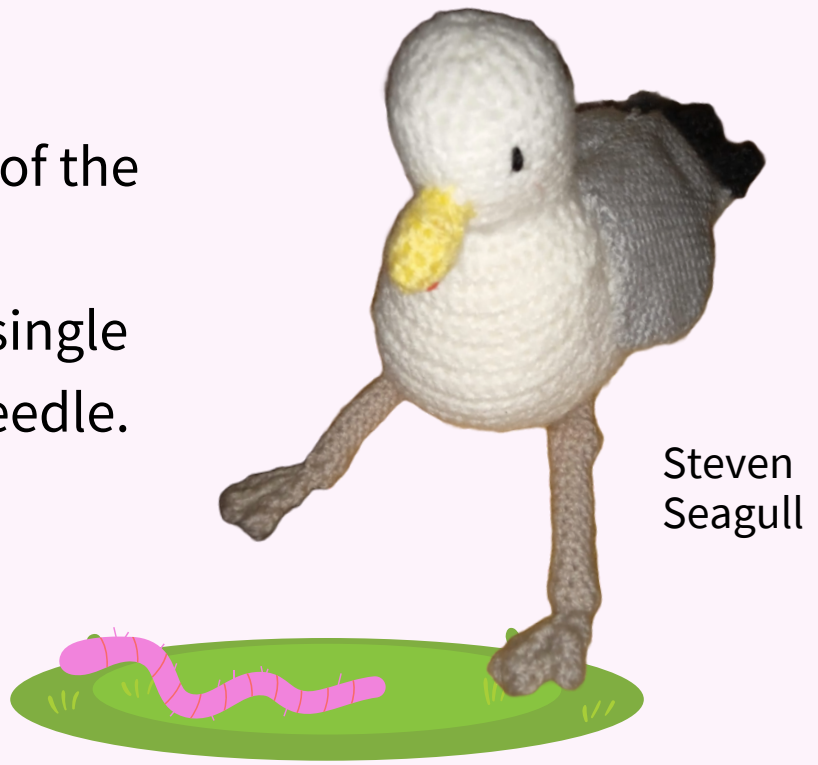


is for
Crochet

cro·chet

Needlework consisting of the interlocking of looped stitches formed with a single thread and a hooked needle.

A dancing seagull stamps its feet on grass to make the worm think it is raining, helping to entice the worm to the surface.



Steven
Seagull

Joanna started crocheting soon after her Nanna died.

She wanted to do something to remember her Nanna by, and she remembered that her Nanna used to love making her blankets when she was little, and that she was even allowed to choose what colour yarn was used in them.

The act of crocheting became an immersive experience for Joanna. The repetitive motion of the hook, the soft caress of the yarn against her fingers, and the gradual emergence of patterns provided a sensory balance she had long sought. With each project, she not only honed her skills but also discovered a unique way to regulate her heightened sensory experiences.

Joanna's love for crochet took on a special significance when she started crafting stuffed animals. These weren't just any toys; they were designed with sensory needs in mind. Filled with different textures, from the silkiest yarns to the grainiest stuffing, these animals were a tactile delight. Some had patches of soft velvet or rough jute, while others contained beads that created a gentle, soothing sound when squeezed.

Realising how beneficial these sensory toys were for her, Joanna decided to share them. She started a small stall at the Trinity market. To her surprise, the toys were a hit not only among children but also adults. Many individuals, like Joanna, sought comfort in the varying textures and sensations the toys offered.

News of Joanna's unique creations spread, catching the attention of therapists and educators who recognized their potential therapeutic value. Schools started incorporating them into their special education programs, and therapists used them as tools in sensory integration therapy.

Joanna's simple act of self-soothing had blossomed into a movement that was helping countless others. And as she sat in her cosy corner, surrounded by a rainbow of yarns, she realized that in weaving these threads, she wasn't just crafting toys; she was stitching together a community of understanding, acceptance, and sensory harmony.



Case Studies

Case Study 1: Mia - The Aspiring Artist

Background: Mia, a 20-year-old fine arts student, often struggled with long theoretical lectures. She found it hard to concentrate on just spoken words without any visual stimulation.

Fidget of Choice: Mia uses a fidget bracelet embedded with small, movable beads.

Usage: While listening to lectures, Mia rolls the beads between her fingers, which offers a tactile distraction without diverting her from the subject matter.

Impact: Mia has found that the bracelet helps her to process auditory information better. Her grades have improved, and she feels more present during classes. Plus, the bracelet complements her bohemian style, often leading to classmates asking where they can get one.

Case Studies

Case Study 2: Raj - The Detail-Oriented Computer Scientist

Background: Raj, a 22-year-old computer science major, loves diving deep into coding. But he sometimes feels overwhelmed during intense debugging sessions.

Fidget of Choice: Raj opts for a metal fidget spinner with a sleek, geometric design.

Usage: When he hits a block in his coding, Raj spins the fidget on his desk. The rhythmic motion and the quiet whirr it produces help him recalibrate his thoughts.

Impact: The spinner acts as a quick mental break, allowing Raj to return to his work with a refreshed mind. His peers, many of whom appreciate modern design, often commend its aesthetic appeal, merging functionality with style.

Case Studies

Case Study 3: Alejandro - The Energetic Political Science Major

Background: Alejandro, 24, is a philosophy postgraduate who spends hours reading dense material. While he loves the depth of his studies, the sheer volume can be anxiety-inducing.

Fidget of Choice: Alejandro uses a fidget ring.

Usage: The ring has an inner band that can be spun. When reading or contemplating, Alejandro finds himself turning the ring, grounding himself.

Impact: The repetitive motion offers Alejandro a meditative rhythm, helping him digest complex ideas without feeling overwhelmed. The stylish design of the ring is subtle yet offers the perfect blend of fashion and function.

Case Studies

Case Study 4: Lila - The Thoughtful Philosopher

Background: Lila, 19, is always on the move. Energetic and passionate, she's heavily involved in student organizations. However, she gets restless during back-to-back meetings.

Fidget of Choice: Lila carries a compact fidget cube.

Usage: Each side of the cube offers different activities like switches, buttons, or textured grips. During meetings, Lila discreetly manipulates the cube, channelling her excess energy.

Impact: The fidget cube allows Lila to maintain her active participation in meetings without becoming visibly restless or distracted. Classmates often ask her about the cube, intrigued by its multi-functionality.

NEWS ALERT

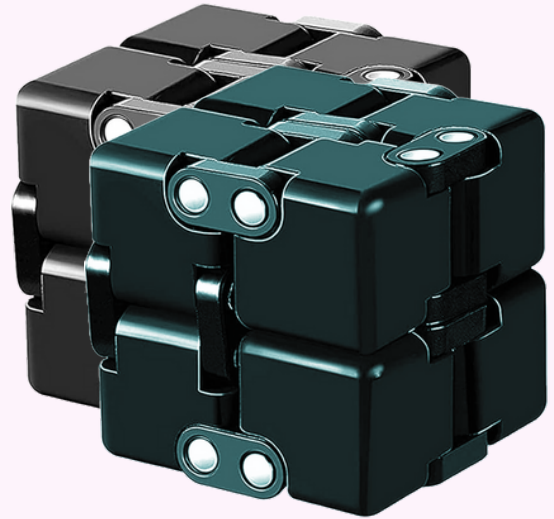
The Trinity disAbility Service Crochet ‘Octopus’ was seen at certain locations around the Trinity campus during Orientation Week 2023. Who knows where the ‘Octopus’ will turn up next. Meanwhile, you can always drop by the Trinity disAbility Service office if you want to see the Crochet ‘Octopus’ and other Crochet Animals.



Fidget Rings



Fidget Cubes



Fidget Spinners



Fidget Bracelets



Conclusion:

Being socially conscious and academically focused are not mutually exclusive. In fact, the two can harmoniously co-exist, and fidget tools are a testament to that. So, whether it's to make a style statement, advocate for a broader understanding of learning tools, or simply boost focus during a long lecture, fidget tools are emerging as the must-have accessory for the modern student.



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Prepared by:

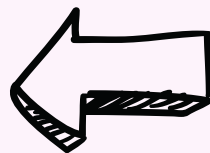
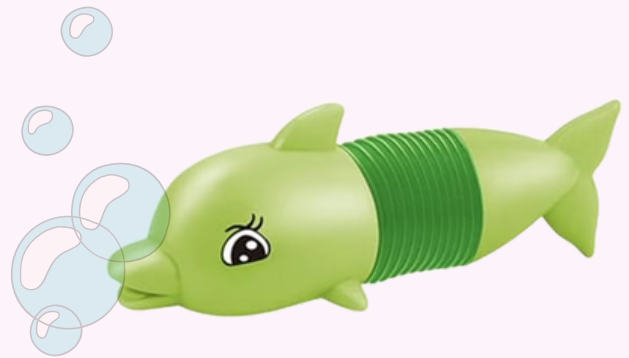
Trinity disAbility Service
Trinity disAbility Hub
Printing House Square
Trinity College Dublin
D02 DP29.

Email: askds@tcd.ie
Phone: +353 1 896 3111
www.tcd.ie/disability



Author:

Fidgets for the Socially
Conscious by Declan
Treanor, Trinity disAbility
Service Director.



Scan to QR code for the
Trinity disAbility Service
website.