

Discreet Stimming Ideas

TL;DR · QUICK SUMMARY

- Stimming (self-regulating movements or sounds) helps many neurodivergent people manage emotion and sensory input.
- “Discreet” options can help in settings where you're not ready to stim openly.
- Where possible, stimming openly is valid too; discretion is about your comfort, not a requirement.
- Suppressing stimming entirely can be tiring and isn't necessary or healthy long-term.

A Note Before You Read On

This resource offers general guidance and reflects common experience, not professional, legal, medical or financial advice. It is not a substitute for employment law, HR policy, occupational health guidance, or individual professional assessment. Every person's experience of neurodivergence is different, so please adapt anything here to your own situation. The Uniquely Wired Network does not accept liability for decisions, actions or outcomes arising from the use of this material. If you need advice specific to your circumstances, please consult a qualified professional (e.g. HR, legal, medical, or financial advisor).

Why This Matters

Stimming serves a real regulatory purpose. Having a few low-visibility options can help in moments where you want that regulation without extra attention, without needing to suppress the need altogether.

What This Might Look Like

- Quietly clicking a pen or tapping a foot during a long meeting.
- Squeezing a small object in your pocket during a stressful call.
- Gently pressing your feet into the floor to self-regulate discreetly.

Hand & Object-Based

- A small fidget item kept in a pocket or desk drawer (e.g. a smooth stone, putty, a ring you can spin).
- Clicking a pen cap, or gently tapping fingers against a leg under a desk.
- Holding a warm drink and focusing on the sensation.

Body-Based & Subtle Movement

- Pressing feet firmly into the floor, or gently rocking in a chair.
- Tensing and releasing muscles (e.g. shoulders, hands) rhythmically.
- Chewing gum, or using a chewable pendant/pen top if oral stimming helps.

If You're Comfortable Being More Visible

- Openly using a fidget toy at your desk, if your environment feels safe enough.
- Taking short movement breaks (walking, stretching) rather than suppressing the urge entirely.
- Explaining briefly if a colleague asks, only if and when you want to.

Helpful Phrases You Can Borrow

You don't have to use these exact words. Take what fits and leave the rest.

"This just helps me focus, hope that's okay!"

"I fidget when I'm concentrating, it's not a distraction from the conversation."

Quick Tips

- There's no single "correct" way to stim. Experiment to find what actually helps you.
- Suppressing stimming entirely can increase stress and fatigue over time.
- Keep a couple of small items in your bag or desk for easy access.
- It's okay for your stimming preferences to change depending on mood or environment.

- You never owe anyone an explanation for a harmless self-regulating habit.
- If you're ready, being open about stimming can also help normalise it for others.

Want to Know More?

- See our companion guide: “Emotional Regulation at Work” for wider regulation strategies.
- Online ND communities often share and review specific fidget tools and sensory products.

Before You Go

Stimming is a completely valid way to self-regulate; it doesn't need to be hidden out of shame, even if discretion feels right for now.

Finding what works for you is worth the trial and error it takes.