

How Perfectionistic Are You?

By Amy Scholten, MPH

Most of us are perfectionistic in certain areas of our lives. Those who are strongly perfectionistic, however, have a tendency to be displeased with almost anything that isn't perfect. This can cause a great deal of stress. The following survey has been designed to give you some insight into how perfectionistic you are. Read each question carefully and choose the answer that describes how you *typically* tend to react. Please keep in mind that this is a *general* assessment, not a diagnostic tool. Please see a mental health care provider for more in-depth testing.

- 1. You've been extremely busy at work. You now have to turn in a project that isn't as well done as you'd like. How do you feel?**
 - a) Not concerned. It's good enough.
 - b) I wish I could've done a better job, but I accept that this was the best I could do given the amount of time I had.
 - c) I'm pretty stressed out because I can't stand to turn in anything less than my best work.

- 2. When you look in the mirror, what do you tend to focus on the most?**
 - a) Usually nothing in particular. I don't worry much about how I look.
 - b) I focus on making myself look as best as I can. But I accept that there are some things about my appearance that I cannot change.
 - c) I focus on what I would like to change about my appearance. I'm rarely satisfied with how I look.

- 3. I think that being average is...**
 - a) Always okay
 - b) Sometimes okay
 - c) Never okay

- 4. Do you ever have difficulty getting started on an important project or activity? If so, what tends to be the reason?**
 - a) I feel unmotivated or would rather do something more fun
 - b) I'm usually distracted by other important things
 - c) I'm busy planning and worrying so much about things being perfect that I just can't bring myself to get started

- 5. What is your approach when working to reach a goal?**
- a) I don't care much for working on a goal—I just want to be done with it
 - b) I enjoy the process of working toward a goal as well as the achievement
 - c) I focus on the results, achieving the goal
- 6. You try a new activity that you think you'll enjoy and find that you're not very good at it. What do you tend to do?**
- a) I usually give up because I'd rather do something easy
 - b) I continue to work at it, because even if I don't excel, I can still improve or at least get some enjoyment out of it
 - c) I usually give it up because I don't like to do things that I'm not good at
- 7. How do you view yourself?**
- a) I think I'm easy to please
 - b) I think that my expectations are usually reasonable, but sometimes I can be difficult to please
 - c) I think I'm usually difficult to please
- 8. How do you tend to approach your work?**
- a) I try to do a good job but don't worry much about it
 - b) I do a good job and tend to focus on my successes
 - c) I'm not satisfied unless it's done perfectly; I focus on my mistakes and imperfections
- 9. How do you tend to view others' work?**
- a) I don't really pay much attention to it
 - b) I notice the overall quality, especially what they have done well
 - c) I focus on their mistakes and imperfections
- 10. How do you tend to feel after making a mistake or experiencing a failure?**
- a) I don't dwell on it too much and bounce back quickly
 - b) I feel bothered but try to use it as a learning experience
 - c) I tend to feel depressed, angry with myself, or guilty
- 11. How do you feel when you receive constructive criticism?**
- a) I don't pay much attention to it
 - b) I don't always like it but I know it can help me to improve
 - c) I tend to feel attacked

12. If you took a test and answered eight out of 10 questions correctly, how would you feel?

- a) Very happy because I usually don't study very much
- b) Pleased, but hope I would do better next time
- c) Disappointed that I got two questions wrong

13. When my colleagues make a mistake, I...

- a) Usually ignore it
- b) Sometimes tell them about it
- c) Usually tell them about it

14. How often do you worry that a friend, lover or spouse will leave you because you're not perfect enough?

- a) Rarely or never
- b) Sometimes
- c) Frequently

15. I am highly critical of myself.

- a) Rarely or never
- b) Sometimes
- c) Frequently

Scoring

Number of a, b, and c Answers	Point Value for Answers	Total Point Value (multiply total number of a, b, and c answers by their corresponding point value)
Number a answers:	All a answers = 1 point	
Number of b answers:	All b answers = 5 points	
Number of c answers:	All c answers = 10 points	
		Score (add total of a, b, and c points):

Your Score	Interpretation
15-30	Your score suggests that you tend to be an easygoing person. You “go with the flow.”
31-59	Your score suggests that you’re pretty easygoing most of the time. However, there may be times when you expect a lot of yourself or others.
60-89	Your score suggests that you tend to be a high achiever. You expect a lot of yourself and may be perfectionistic in certain areas of your life.
90-115	Your score suggests that you have perfectionist tendencies. Expecting too much of yourself and/or others can lead to stress.
116-150	Your score suggests that you are very perfectionistic. This may be causing high levels of stress in your life. You might benefit from a stress reduction program or some counseling.

Source:

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Biography

Amy Scholten, MPH, has a Master of Public Health in health promotion and education from the University of South Carolina and a Bachelor of Science in food and nutrition from Framingham State College. She is a freelance health writer and has taught stress management at Ithaca College in Ithaca, NY, USA.