

look within

Understanding your values, comfort zones, skills and aptitudes

To choose a career that will fit you well, first you have to understand yourself. Explore who you are. Know your likes and dislikes. Recognize what you are good at, and what you are not so good at. What things are most important to you? Pay attention to the way you feel about your experiences. All these things help you figure out the kind of work you might enjoy someday. The checklists on the next few pages will give you a start.

values

What do you value most?

From the list at the right, think about what things are most important to you. Which ones make you feel best? Which ones would you be most upset not to have? Prioritize the six or seven you value most by writing a “1” in the blank in front of the thing that is most important to you, a “2” for the thing that is next most important to you, etc. If some of the things your value most are not on this list, add them.

- ___ acceptance
- ___ material possessions
- ___ security
- ___ status
- ___ people
- ___ challenge
- ___ creativity
- ___ independence
- ___ power
- ___ family
- ___ other (please specify _____)
- ___ other (please specify _____)

in the zone

Your workplace comfort zones

It is important to learn about various careers' working conditions. Think about how well they would fit you. For example, if you don't like to sit still for very long, you probably would not be happy working mainly at a desk.



Likes and Dislikes

Write an "L" in the blank beside the working environments you think you would like. Write a "D" in the blank beside those you think you would dislike. As you learn more about careers, keep your preferred "comfort zones" in mind. Online sources like the Occupational Outlook Handbook, My Next Move and O*NET Online can provide information on the working conditions of specific careers.

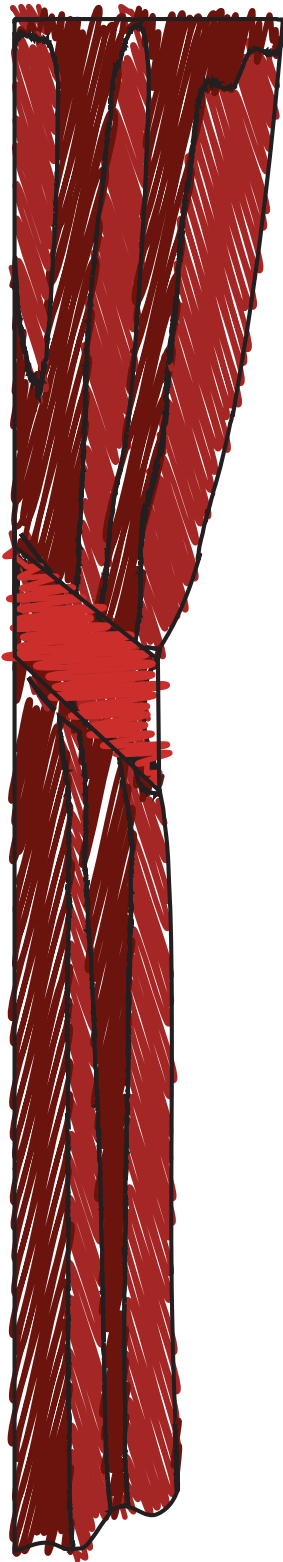
- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> outside work | <input type="checkbox"/> non-physical work |
| <input type="checkbox"/> inside work | <input type="checkbox"/> overnight travel |
| <input type="checkbox"/> quiet environment | <input type="checkbox"/> extended travel |
| <input type="checkbox"/> noisy environment | <input type="checkbox"/> repeating tasks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> risk-taking work | <input type="checkbox"/> variety of tasks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> safe, predictable work | <input type="checkbox"/> working with people |
| <input type="checkbox"/> rotating shift work | <input type="checkbox"/> working with things |
| <input type="checkbox"/> regular hours | <input type="checkbox"/> working with data |
| <input type="checkbox"/> weekend work | <input type="checkbox"/> working with ideas |
| <input type="checkbox"/> physical work | |

sources for working conditions

Occupational Outlook Handbook
www.bls.gov/oooh

My Next Move
www.mynextmove.org

O*NET Online
www.onetonline.org



talent show

Your aptitudes & skills

What do you enjoy?

Think about how you spend your free time. It could be helping children, playing sports, cooking, doing paperwork, reading or anything else.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What are your aptitudes?

What are you naturally good at, either physically or mentally? It could be getting along well with other people, quickly grasping how to do math problems or being able to carry a perfect musical pitch.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What are your skills?

Skills are slightly different than aptitudes. While aptitudes are natural abilities or talents, skills are the abilities gained through training and practice. Your skills could be in any of several areas, such as art, a craft or science.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Not sure what your aptitudes or skills may be?

Ask someone who knows you well (like a relative or teacher) for help.



keep
in mind

Some of your interests, values and skills may change over time, but many will stay the same. Keep this information in your career portfolio or personal learning plan along with your goals. Refer to it often and update it as you develop your career plans.