

A Look at How You Organize Things, React to Things, and Get Things Done

Adapted from work by Peg Dawson & Richard Guare,

Authors of *Smart but Scattered* <http://www.smartbutscatteredkids.com/>

WHAT ARE EXECUTIVE SKILLS?

“Executive skills” is probably a phrase you haven’t heard before but you’ll see they are skills that you use every day – and we’re all good at some and not so good at others. They are skills we use to manage our life and achieve our goals. They help us accomplish big goals, like completing an education or training program, getting a job, and saving for a down payment for a house. They also help us achieve smaller goals and everyday tasks like getting to work on time, completing the paperwork to get child care, or getting the laundry done.

WHY AM I DOING THIS?

This profile will help you get to know yourself better by looking at how well you:

- ❖ Organize Things
- ❖ React to Things
- ❖ Get Things Done

The questions will help you to think about things you may already know about yourself in a new light. It will help you see what moves you forward – your strengths—and what might hold you back – your weaknesses.

❖ *Note to program staff: Please see the companion Guidance for Administering the Executive Skills Profile for further information on how to use the profile in a coaching role.*

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Read each item and then think about how well it describes you. Use the rating scale to choose the best score. If the item doesn’t describe you at all then you’d circle 1, *strongly disagree*. If it describes you very well then you’d circle 6, *strongly agree*. Often, you’ll find that you’re somewhere in between so then you’d circle one of the numbers from 2 to 5 that describes you best. Be as honest as possible—the more honest you are, the more you’ll learn about yourself.

Here’s an example:

Item	SECTION A	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Tend to disagree	4 Tend to agree	5 Agree	6 Strongly Agree
1.	I am an organized person.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2.	I keep my space neat and have things where they belong.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3.	I organize my work before I start doing it.	1	2	3	4	5	6

2. Put the score for each of the sections on the scoring sheet on page 5 that says, “My Executive Skills Profile.”

3. Now, look back over your whole profile. Your highest scores indicate strengths (what you do easily). Put these in the strengths box. Your lowest scores are the areas that are harder for you. Put these in the challenges box. You’ll find descriptions of each of the skills on page 6.

4. Did anything surprise you about your profile?

Item	SECTION A	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Tend to disagree	4 Tend to agree	5 Agree	6 Strongly Agree
1.	I am an organized person.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2.	I keep my space neat and put things back where they belong.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3.	I organize my work before I start doing it.	1	2	3	4	5	6

Item	SECTION B	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Tend to disagree	4 Tend to agree	5 Agree	6 Strongly Agree
1.	I finish what I set out to do by the end of the day.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2.	I am good at guessing how long it takes to do something.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3.	I am on time for appointments and activities.	1	2	3	4	5	6

Item	SECTION C	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Tend to disagree	4 Tend to agree	5 Agree	6 Strongly Agree
1.	I start my day with a clear plan for what I need to get done.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2.	I focus on the most important things when I have a lot to do.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3.	I break big tasks down into smaller tasks and set deadlines to get things done.	1	2	3	4	5	6

Item	SECTION D	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Tend to disagree	4 Tend to agree	5 Agree	6 Strongly Agree
1.	I listen before I draw conclusions.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2.	I think before I speak.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3.	I get all the facts before I take action.	1	2	3	4	5	6

Item	SECTION E	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Tend to disagree	4 Tend to agree	5 Agree	6 Strongly Agree
1.	I respond well to unexpected events.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2.	I easily adjust when plans change.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3.	I like to try new ways of doing things.	1	2	3	4	5	6

Item	SECTION F	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Tend to disagree	4 Tend to agree	5 Agree	6 Strongly Agree
1.	I keep doing what I am supposed to do, even if I get upset.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2.	I keep my cool, even if my feelings are hurt.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3.	I hold onto my temper.	1	2	3	4	5	6

Item	SECTION G	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Tend to disagree	4 Tend to agree	5 Agree	6 Strongly Agree
1.	I learn from my mistakes.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2.	I know if I'm doing a good job even before someone tells me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3.	I am a "big picture" thinker and enjoy solving problems.	1	2	3	4	5	6

Item	SECTION H	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Tend to disagree	4 Tend to agree	5 Agree	6 Strongly Agree
1.	I believe in getting started on tasks as soon as possible.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2.	I do things that I say I'll do, without delay.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3.	I finish tasks before the last minute.	1	2	3	4	5	6

Item	SECTION I	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Tend to disagree	4 Tend to agree	5 Agree	6 Strongly Agree
1.	I find it easy to ignore distractions and stay focused until I finish a task.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2.	Once I start something, I work on it until it is done.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3.	Even if I get interrupted, I find it easy to get back on track and complete what I started.	1	2	3	4	5	6

Item	SECTION J	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Tend to disagree	4 Tend to agree	5 Agree	6 Strongly Agree
1.	I am driven to meet my goals.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2.	I give up short-term pleasures to work on long-term goals.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3.	When I set goals, I don't let anything get in the way of my meeting them.	1	2	3	4	5	6

Item	SECTION K	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Tend to disagree	4 Tend to agree	5 Agree	6 Strongly Agree
1.	I enjoy working in a very demanding, fast-paced environment.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2.	Some pressure helps me to do my best.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3.	I find it easy to manage a constantly changing work schedule.	1	2	3	4	5	6

Item	SECTION L	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Tend to disagree	4 Tend to agree	5 Agree	6 Strongly Agree
1.	I have a good memory for facts, dates and details.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2.	I am very good at remembering the things I am supposed to do.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3.	When I've done something once, I find it easy to remember how to do it again.	1	2	3	4	5	6

My Executive Skills Profile	Individual Statement Scores	Total Section Scores
A. Organization (Keeping Things in Order)	1.	
	2.	
	3.	
B. Time Management (Using Time Well)	1.	
	2.	
	3.	
C. Planning/Prioritization (Planning Ahead)	1.	
	2.	
	3.	
D. Response Inhibition (Think, Then Act)	1.	
	2.	
	3.	
E. Flexibility (Going with the Flow)	1.	
	2.	
	3.	
F. Emotional Control (Staying Cool)	1.	
	2.	
	3.	
G. Metacognition (Stepping Back)	1.	
	2.	
	3.	
H. Task Initiation (Getting Started)	1.	
	2.	
	3.	
I. Sustained Attention (Staying Attentive)	1.	
	2.	
	3.	
J. Goal-Directed Persistence (Sticking with It)	1.	
	2.	
	3.	
K. Stress Tolerance (Dealing with Stress)	1.	
	2.	
	3.	
L. Working Memory (Remembering)	1.	
	2.	
	3.	

**Your Executive Skill Strengths
(Three highest scores)**

**Your Executive Skill Challenges
(Three lowest scores)**

235

Executive Skills Definitions

How We Organize and Plan Things

Organization (Keeping Things in Order): The ability to create and maintain ways of keeping track of information or materials.

Time Management (Managing Time): To manage time well, we first have to believe that time is important. It also requires being able to guess how much time it will take to do something, know how much time we have, decide how we'll use it, and stay within the time limits and deadlines we've agreed to.

Planning/Prioritization (Planning Ahead): The ability to create a roadmap to reach a goal or to complete a task. This also involves being able to make decisions about what's important to focus on and what's not important and can wait for later.

How We React to Things

Response Inhibition (Think, Then Act): This is all about thinking before we act. When we stop and think, we resist the urge to say or do something that we might regret later.

Flexibility (Going with the Flow): This is about being able to go with the flow when things change or get in our way. When we are highly flexible, we adapt when we run into obstacles or setbacks and adjust when we get new information or make mistakes.

Emotional Control (Staying Cool): The ability to manage emotions in order to achieve goals, complete tasks, or control and direct behavior.

Metacognition (Stepping Back): When we "step back" we take a look at how we are acting – and how we handle ourselves. When we are good at this, we ask ourselves, "How am I doing?" or "How did I do?" or "How did my actions affect other people?"

How We Get Things Done

Task Initiation (Getting Started): This is the ability to begin projects without finding reasons to keep putting them off. It's about taking that first step ... as little as it might be.

Sustained Attention (Staying Attentive): Everyone gets distracted, tired and bored. But, this is about how well we can pull ourselves back from that – in order to stay attentive to the person or task that is right in front of us.

Goal-Directed Persistence (Sticking with It): This is being able to have a goal, follow through to the completion of the goal, and not be put off by or distracted by competing interests.

Stress Tolerance (Dealing with Stress): As smart as it is to try and avoid stressful situations, the truth is that we do sometimes fall into stressful situations. When we deal with this well, we can do well even when faced with uncertainty, change and high demands.

Working Memory (Remembering): The ability to hold information – or past experiences—in our minds while doing something new. When we remember well, we build on what we've learned before.