



Brain Sense™

SWAP™

SENSORY WORKSTYLE ASSESSMENT PROFILE

**CANDIDATE:** Neutral Test

**REPORT DATE:** 08 November 2024

**CONFIDENTIAL REPORT**

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# Senses Impacting Work Style

This report provides feedback on your sensory thresholds, based on the responses given on the SWAP Questionnaire. Through awareness of sensory thresholds - how *quickly* and *intensely* we register sensory stimuli - we can determine Sensory Work Styles. Sensory Work Styles refer to our unconscious preferences at work as result of the unique way in which we process sensory stimuli.

Two easy-to-implement aspects are highlighted in the report: Wellbeing Strategies and Productivity Adaptations, making the workplace healthier and more productive. A summary of the results is provided on page 3, followed by a discussion of each individual sensory system.



## Visual System

Vision is the most complex of all sensory systems. It is the process of discovering what we see in our environment and where it is. From light receptors in the retina, visual stimuli travels down the optic nerve and culminate in the visual cortex. Vision is one of two information senses.



## Auditory System

Hearing should fill us with a sense of awe and wonder. It connects us with the world around us and protects us from danger. From the hair cells in the cochlea, sound waves travel to the bottom brain and then to the auditory cortex which forms part of the upper part of the temporal lobe. Hearing is an information sense.



## Tactile System

Touch is our first language and crucial to emotional and social development. Touch is for connection, protection, and communication. Touch receptors in the skin cover the entire body, and neurons carry stimuli to the sensory cortex in the parietal lobe. Touch is one of three social senses and powerfully impacts our relationships.



## Smell System

Smell receptors are situated in the soft palate at the back of the nose and shortcuts directly to the primary olfactory cortex. This cortex lies near the hippocampus involved with memory, learning, and emotions. A smell can transport us to places, people, and memories within milliseconds. Smell is one of the social senses.



## Taste System

Taste receptors are situated in our taste buds; each taste bud contains 50 - 100 receptors. Taste receptors detect sweet, bitter, sour, salty, or savoury/umami. Taste messages are relayed to the bottom brain and from there to the taste cortex. Taste is one of the social senses.



## Movement Systems

The Vestibular System detects changes in head movement and is responsible for balance, spatial orientation, and a stable gaze. Receptors situated in the inner ear travel to the brainstem and cerebral cortex. Vestibular is one of two regulation senses - it impacts our ability to remain focused and attentive.

The Proprioceptive System detects a physical sense of self; our body's position in space. Proprioception contributes to body movement and behaviour. Receptors are situated in muscles, tendons, and joints. Messages are relayed to the spinal cord and brain. Proprioception soothes all other sensory systems and helps us feel calm and focused.



## Sensory Work Style

Sensory needs across all seven sensory systems determine work style habits, rituals, behaviour, and preferred environment. We are mostly unconscious of sensory needs, although we constantly seek sensory balance - less stimuli if we are in overload and more stimuli if we feel bored. If we know what our sensory work style is, we can optimise person/workspace fit and determine which tasks should be completed where, with whom, and when. This will improve wellbeing and performance.

# Summary of Results

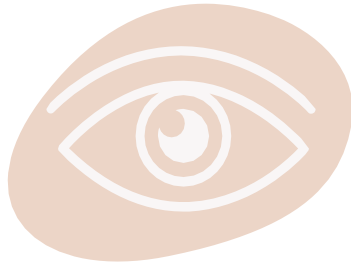
Sensory Threshold Scores indicate how you respond in the work environment across all seven sensory systems measured by the SWAP. Your scores highlight which sensory experiences you are more likely to seek out (if you score high) and which sensory experiences you are more likely to avoid (if you score low).

- Low Thresholds:** You avoid more, or seek less. You have a quick, intense registration.
- Medium Thresholds:** You do not seek or avoid. You have a neutral registration.
- High Thresholds:** You seek more. You do not have a quick, intense registration.



How these scores influence your Work Style is discussed from the next page onwards, together with wellbeing strategies and environmental adaptations for a healthy and productive workday.

\*Please note that this is not a clinical diagnostic assessment.



## Your Visual Score: **Neutral**

### What this means:

You are neutral to visual stimuli from the work environment. You do not seek or avoid visual stimulation. Your visual system is adaptable.

### Preferences:

You have a neutral response to visually busy as well as visually calm workspaces and are equally happy and productive in both. You work well in an open-plan office, designated space, and work from home environment.

### Words of Wisdom:

On occasion you enjoy visual detail, patterns, bright colours, etc. At other times, you prefer minimalistic, visually calm environments. Your work tasks may determine sensory needs: work in organised environments when doing deep-focused tasks, and sensory rich environments when finishing routine tasks or when collaborating. Recognise visual overload – eye irritation, stress, frustration, headaches, decreased concentration, errors, and/or a feeling of disconnect. Prioritise time offline.

### Wellbeing Plan:

Self-awareness around visual overload is key. Rest your eyes, unplug, enjoy activities away from all screens. Practice deep breathing. Spend time in nature. Take regular movement breaks. Find balance between online and offline visual activities. Every 20 minutes, look away from your screen. Close your eyes and massage temples. Bring nature and visual interest into your workspace with pot plants or photos of loved ones. Clean and declutter your workspace. Store valuable items in designated places.

### Productivity Adaptations:

Prioritise visual breaks; where possible, do not attend virtual meetings back-to-back. Schedule short breaks throughout the day; drink lots of water for increased comfort breaks. Adjust devices to reduce blue light. Position your desk to face away from bright light. Do not multi-task on multiple devices. Switch your phone to silent and put away, and prioritise off-screen leisure time. Sit in the middle of the room when working on routine tasks and choose a visually neat and calm space when doing deep focus tasks. The less time spent on a screen the night before, the better the output will be the following day. Unplug at least an hour before bedtime for a good night's rest; improved sleep usually results in improved productivity.



## Your Auditory Score: Neutral

### What this means:

You are neutral to auditory messages; you are not seeking or avoiding auditory stimuli; you can concentrate in quiet as well as noisier work environments.

### Preferences:

You are not distracted by background noise and can concentrate regardless of chatter, or office equipment. At times you enjoy energetic, loud music, and at other times you prefer silence or calming playlists. You can work from home or the office.

### Words of Wisdom:

Recognise auditory overload and irritation through regular sensory check-ins. Adjust music or auditory stimulation according to your energy levels and specific work tasks on the day. Acknowledge different auditory needs amongst team members.

### Wellbeing Plan:

Always be considerate towards auditory sensitive colleagues. Monitor your own stress levels and productivity. Use music to energise you when feeling lethargic and calm when stressed. You may need quiet workspaces when doing deep-focus work and vibey environments when doing routine tasks and when collaborating. Prioritise quiet, re-regulation time.

### Productivity Adaptations:

When in need of silence, work from home or adjust the environment by means of headphones, room dividers, or ear plugs. When in need of auditory stimuli, work from a coffee shop or in-office, and position yourself in the centre of the room. Use music to energise when you feel lethargic, and calm when you feel stressed. Listen to music en route to work for a productive and happy day.



## Your Touch Score: **Neutral**

### What this means:

You have a neutral response to touch. You do not seek or avoid touch. You are not irritated or distracted by touch during your workday. You can work from home in your own space or in a shared workspace.

### Preferences:

You are productive in open-plan workspaces and when working from home. You are comfortable sitting anywhere at work. You may not have specific preferences regarding group desks, hot-desk systems, shared workspaces, or remote work as result of touch preferences.

### Words of Wisdom:

There are many different touch needs within a team. Touch overload results in stress and distractibility. Touch-seeking colleagues may be less aware of e.g. hygiene practices but appreciate signs of affection from friends at work. Empathy and awareness are imperative. Nourish your own sense of touch for improved wellbeing, energy, and focus.

### Wellbeing Plan:

Do regular sensory check-ins and adapt your environment according to touch needs. Complete certain tasks in your own workspace and others at the office or while collaborating in a group. Hybrid work is a good fit. Schedule touch-rich leisure time activities to nourish your sense of touch with team sport, swimming, cooking, baking, gardening, time with pets, or arts and crafts.

### Productivity Adaptations:

Regulate your skin before work – exercise and enjoy baths or showers. Moisturise if this makes you feel comfortable. Wear comfortable clothes, remove touch irritants like ill-fitting clothing, uncomfortable shoes, or dangling jewellery. Choose a workspace according to touch needs and levels of alertness on the day. Keep your desk neat and tidy. Place preferred fidget objects of enjoyable texture on your desk such as stress balls, putty, clay, or fidget magnets. Take down notes, doodle, and draw to stay focused – pen to paper is recommended for multi-sensory stimulation and optimal concentration.



## Your Smell Score: **Neutral**

### What this means:

You have a neutral response to smell stimuli. You do not seek or avoid smells. You are not distracted by workspace smells.

### Preferences:

You do not have strong smell preferences. You are likely to choose perfumes/aftershave/cologne according to your mood on the day. You enjoy a variety of smells. You can work in shared workspaces without getting distracted or overloaded.

### Words of Wisdom:

Acknowledge different smell preferences amongst team members. Only use smell stimulation when working remotely. You can sit anywhere at work, as you have a neutral response to smells generated from the kitchen, canteen, lunch boxes, colleagues, etc.

### Wellbeing Plan:

When working remotely, use an alerting smell (such as citrus, peppermint, spearmint, eucalyptus, pine, tea tree oil, fir needle, or cinnamon) to improve focus. Use a calming smell when stressed or in your bedroom (scents like lavender, chamomile, jasmine, ylang-ylang, vanilla, neroli, or rose work well). Smell may activate learning and memory and regulate emotions through connections with the brain's hippocampus. Choose your own preferred smell, as the sense of smell is individualised and linked to memories and past experiences.

### Productivity Adaptations:

An alerting smell of your choice can be used for improved productivity when working in your own space. A calming smell of your choice can be used for improved sleep and relaxation. Chew fragrant chewing gum when distracted as an activating smell and taste sensory strategy.



Your Taste Score: **Neutral**

**What this means:**

You have a neutral response to taste. You do not seek or avoid taste. You enjoy a wide variety of foods, not showing strong preferences.

**Preferences:**

You do not have specific taste preferences and are neutral to taste stimuli. You generally enjoy a wide variety of food. You can be described as an adventurous eater, willing to try new foods.

**Words of Wisdom:**

Be aware of different taste preferences within teams. Taste sensitive colleagues may experience overload as result of taste stimuli, while taste-seeking colleagues may seek out variety and interest. Adventurous colleagues may suggest unfamiliar meals, while sensitive colleagues will prefer the same meal in a familiar setting.

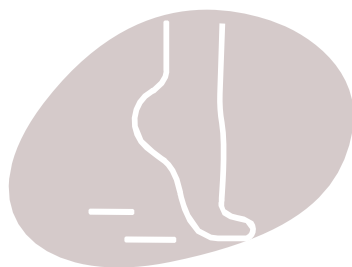
**Wellbeing Plan:**

Follow a healthy and varied diet and nourish your own sense of taste. Prepare and enjoy flavourful, satisfying, and enjoyable meals and snacks. Add herbs and spices according to your preference. Drink lots of water to prevent eating when dehydrated.

**Productivity Adaptations:**

Eat healthy crunchy and chewy foods when distracted or when stressed. Be considerate towards auditory sensitive colleagues! Chew gum, drink lots of water, and enjoy preferred meals outdoors. Nuts, raw uncooked vegetables with dips, frozen grapes, crunchy green apples, pineapple, cucumber, or rusks are all examples of healthy snacks for improved productivity. Sour, bitter, and spicy tastes are energising for better concentration, while sweet and salty tastes are calming when stressed. Ice water and icy beverages are both energising and calming for a productive and healthy day at work.





## Your Movement Score: **Neutral**

### What this means:

You have a neutral response to movement; you do not seek or avoid movement. You tolerate different head and body movements well and enjoy variety in exercise.

### Preferences:

You do not have strong movement preferences. You sometimes seek movement, and at other times choose to be sedentary. Adjust exercise routines according to energy and stress levels on the day. Do sensory check-ins to determine needs.

### Words of Wisdom:

Be conscious of different movement needs amongst team members. Some colleagues may be active, fidgety, and on-the-go, while others may feel overstimulated by too much movement. Take a movement break when unproductive but also when feeling stressed = movement is calming when we are overwhelmed and alerting when we feel distracted.

### Wellbeing Plan:

The more you move, the better for wellbeing and productivity. Prioritise exercise, preferably before or during your workday. Choose exercise routines according to your preference and energy on the day. You may prefer high intensity exercise when stressed and moderate exercise at other times. Movement regulates all sensory systems. Schedule 5-minute movement breaks throughout your workday.

### Productivity Adaptations:

Take regular movement breaks. Adjust work environments to incorporate moving and standing. Schedule regular walking meetings. Drink lots of water for increased toilet breaks. Use an alarm to remind you to move every 20 minutes, for at least 1 minute. Visit clients in-person. Always use the staircase. Perform squats, jumping jacks, and other short bursts of movement during a break. Incorporate mini-movements by playing with clay, chewing gum, taking down notes, and using a resistance band. Do in chair stretches and chair push-ups. Look up-and-down and left-and-right (x4) to improve productivity immediately and effectively through vestibular stimuli.



## Your Sensory Work Style: Neutral

### What this means:

You are equally productive in sensory-busy and sensory-calm environments. You are comfortable working remotely, but also working from the office. You are adaptable and flexible regarding your workspace.

### Preferences:

You do not have strong sensory preferences regarding work environments. You are happy and productive in most environments. Choose work environments according to tasks and energy levels on the day. You are a good fit for hybrid or flexible work.

### Words of Wisdom:

Some work colleagues may find working from the office overloading and stressful, while others may find remote work lonely and frustrating. Do regular sensory check-ins to monitor and manage your own wellbeing and performance. Where possible, alternate tasks, environments, and collaboration with individual work, for optimal performance.

### Wellbeing Plan:

You are well suited to hybrid or flexible work. You may need sensory-rich environments for routine tasks and sensory-calm environments for deep-focus tasks. Cultivate awareness around levels of alertness and choose work environments for optimal performance and wellbeing on the day.

### Productivity Adaptations:

On low-energy days or when under-stimulated, implement alerting strategies like enjoying an iced coffee while walking briskly. When overwhelmed or over-stimulated, choose calm environments and implement calming strategies like enjoying herbal tea in the garden. Engage all the senses for improved productivity: walking meetings, standing work surfaces, gym balls, fidgeting, crunchy/chewy snacks, reading out loud, and utilising an enjoyable workspace smell. Identify go-to sensory practices before and after meetings. Regulate before work through exercise and self-care. Re-regulate after work through walks, gardening, cooking, and hot baths or showers. You are a great driver of connection in your place of work.

## Concluding Comments

Sensory Thresholds determine Sensory Work Styles – habits, preferences, and rituals at work. Sensory Work Styles are our unconscious responses to environments, tasks, and colleagues. Sensory Work Styles can vary significantly within teams. What your colleague may find overloading and exhausting, may be energising to you. Respect, empathy, and increased awareness of sensory diversity are crucial to effective teams.

High-threshold scores represent our seeking senses where we need MORE stimulation to feel happy and focused. Low-threshold scores indicate our avoiding senses where we need LESS stimulation to feel happy and focused. Self-awareness and self-management are imperative for a healthy and productive workday.

### Visual System

- You are adaptable in visually busy and visually calm workspaces.
- You can focus on important visual stimuli and ignore irrelevant distractions.
- You are able to work productively in an open-plan workspace as well as your own office.

### Auditory System

- You are adaptable and can work in noisy as well as quiet environments.
- You can focus on important verbal messages and ignore unimportant background noise.
- You adjust well in open-plan workspaces as well as your own office or when working remotely.

### Tactile System

- You are adaptable in high-density as well as sparsely populated workspaces.
- You can focus in a large open-plan environment as well as designated office.
- You adjust well to group work, teamwork, socialising, networking, and sharing of desks.

### Smell System

- You can work in close proximity to colleagues or in your own space.
- You adjust well to social demands at work like groupwork, teamwork, sharing of desks, networking, and socialising.

### Taste System

- You are adaptable and happy to attend work lunches and socials at any restaurant or venue.
- You enjoy a variety of food.

### Movement Systems

- You most likely enjoy high impact as well as moderate exercise routines.
- You adjust well to movement during your workday.
- Movement will improve wellbeing and productivity; prioritise movement breaks.

### Sensory Work Style

- You are adaptable, flexible, and a good fit to either hybrid, in-office, or remote work.
- You have a neutral response to most colleagues, work tasks, and environments.
- You are fair, even-tempered, and a great connector of people.
- Increase self-awareness and self-management through regular sensory check-ins.

# THANK YOU!

Self-awareness and self-management of unique sensory needs will improve wellbeing and performance for a happy and productive workday.

Pay attention to either sensory overload or sensory deprivation and use calming or energising strategies. Custom-fit sensory strategies and environmental adaptations are effective when implemented according to unique sensory needs.

Fiercely guard and rest the information systems of visual and auditory, lovingly nurture the social senses of touch, smell, and taste; and utilise the regulation senses of movement.

The science behind our sensory systems is a differentiating and powerful tool for a happy and productive workday!

**The successful person in the art of living makes little distinction between their work and their play, their labour and their leisure, their mind and their body, their education and their recreation, their love and their religion.**

**They hardly know which is which, they simply pursue their vision of excellence in whatever they do, leaving others to decide whether they are working or playing.  
To them, they are always doing both."**

- ZEN PHILOSOPHY

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