

# Find your niche



It's about a job: Find your niche



# Find your niche

“Use what talents you possess; the world would be a very silent place if no birds sang except those who sang best.”

Henry Van Dyke, poet.

*If you don't know what you're looking for in a job, you run a real risk of winding up in a role that doesn't suit you.*

*So before you start job hunting, be sure about the sort of work you want to do.*

*What are you good at? What are you passionate about? What interests you? And what minimum wage or salary do you expect? There's a lot to think about.*

*When it comes to sorting out what makes you tick, you're the expert. Nobody else knows you as well as you do. The following exercises will help you get to know yourself even better. After doing them, you'll have a much clearer picture of your skills, talents and personality – and a better idea of the type of work and working environment that best suits you.*

## **Tapping into your talents and skills**

Sorting out what skills you have is a bit like rummaging through an old drawer. You're never quite sure what you're going to find until you start looking.

Sometimes you come across things you forgot about. Sometimes you find things you didn't even know you had. Sometimes you ferret out something so useful you shouldn't have hidden it away in a drawer in the first place!

In the next five exercises you have the opportunity to sort through your skills and put names to them. Don't rush these activities. Many people make the mistake of underestimating their talents. You don't want to fall into the same trap.

Think carefully about the whole range of things you've done in the past as well as what you do now that could be of value to you in the workforce – the skills you learned in college, at work, in the community or through your sporting or special interests, for instance. Maybe you've picked up some useful skills through learning to manage your health too.

Do these exercises alone if you choose – but remember, sometimes it helps to bounce ideas off someone else. Other people sometimes see qualities in us that we don't see in ourselves!



## Identify your transferable skills

### Purpose

To list all your transferable skills. Our transferable skills are a big part of who we are. We don't only use them in our work, but also in our daily lives. And we often take them for granted. The ability to get on well with people is an example of a transferable skill.

### Method

1. Tick the 'can do' box next to each skill you can do. If you believe you have other transferable skills not listed here, add them in the blank spaces.
2. Go back to the beginning of the list and give a second tick in the 'do well' box next to each transferable skill you can do well.
3. Now go through the list for a third time and put a circle around the skills you really enjoy using.

CAN DO DO WELL  
  *Assisting people*

CAN DO DO WELL  
  *Caring for people*

WORKING WITH PEOPLE		WORKING WITH INFORMATION		COMMUNICATION SKILLS				
CAN DO	DO WELL	CAN DO	DO WELL	CAN DO	DO WELL			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Assisting people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Analysing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Advising
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Building relationships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Budgeting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Interpreting
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Caring for people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Calculating	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Presenting
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Consulting with others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Checking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Listening
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cooperating with others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Evaluating	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Negotiating
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Explaining	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Inspecting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Persuading
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Helping others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Memorising	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Promoting
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Listening skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ordering	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Reading
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Problem-solving	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Organising	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Summarising
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Resolving conflict	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Researching	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Talking
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Teaching others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Reviewing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Translating
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Training others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Scheduling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Writing
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Verifying	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

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CREATIVE SKILLS		LEADERSHIP SKILLS		MANUAL SKILLS				
CAN DO	DO WELL	CAN DO	DO WELL	CAN DO	DO WELL			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Arranging	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Organising	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Advising
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Building	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Planning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Interpreting
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cooking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Decision-making	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Presenting
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Demonstrating	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Managing people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Listening
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Designing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Motivating people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Negotiating
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Generating	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Having a vision	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Persuading
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Improvising	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Using initiative	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Promoting
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Inventing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Self-discipline	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Reading
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Performing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Summarising
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Producing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Talking
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Translating
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Writing
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

**Ranking exercise**

Now list your transferable skills. Start with the skills you most enjoy using and do well at, followed by the skills you're good at and finish up with your 'can do' skills. Your list is looking good!

MOST ENJOY	GOOD AT	CAN DO
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

The **three** most important things that came out of this exercise for me were:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

# Exercise

## Identify your personal qualities

### Purpose

To build a clearer picture of your personal qualities. Your personal qualities are the characteristics that define you, such as friendliness, maturity or reliability. They're part of your personality, part of how you conduct yourself in the world.

### Method

1. Read the list of qualities below. Tick each quality that you have used in previous situations.

#### PERSONAL QUALITIES

- |                          |             |                          |               |
|--------------------------|-------------|--------------------------|---------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Accepting   | <input type="checkbox"/> | Expressive    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Adaptable   | <input type="checkbox"/> | Friendly      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Active      | <input type="checkbox"/> | Helpful       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Capable     | <input type="checkbox"/> | Intuitive     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Cheerful    | <input type="checkbox"/> | Mature        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Committed   | <input type="checkbox"/> | Open-minded   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Competent   | <input type="checkbox"/> | Patient       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Creative    | <input type="checkbox"/> | Persevering   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Dependable  | <input type="checkbox"/> | Quick learner |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Discreet    | <input type="checkbox"/> | Sincere       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Organised   | <input type="checkbox"/> | Thrifty       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Efficient   | <input type="checkbox"/> | Trustworthy   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Encouraging | <input type="checkbox"/> | Unpretentious |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Energetic   | <input type="checkbox"/> | Warm          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> |             | <input type="checkbox"/> |               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> |             | <input type="checkbox"/> |               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> |             | <input type="checkbox"/> |               |





## Imagine your ideal day

*Let your imagination run riot with this activity. Find somewhere where you can relax without any distractions and, for a few minutes, visualise your perfect working day. Ahhh...*

What time do you wake up so that you arrive at work on time? \_\_\_\_\_

What do you wear to work? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How do you travel to work? Do you walk, take a bus or train or drive a car? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How long does it take to get to work? \_\_\_\_\_

Where do you work? In what sort of setting – a rural area, a suburb, a small town or a city centre, for example? Do you work indoors or outdoors? What does your ideal workplace look like?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What time does your working day start? \_\_\_\_\_

What tools do you work with? Computers perhaps? Machinery? Artist's brushes? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What sort of organisation do you work for? A community agency? A government department?

A small business? Or a large corporation? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Do you have a boss? What is your boss like? How does your boss treat you? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Or perhaps you are your own boss? How do you behave? How does it feel? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Imagine your ideal day continued...

Do you work with other people? How does your work relate to theirs? \_\_\_\_\_

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How do you get along with your co-workers? \_\_\_\_\_

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What do you spend most of your time doing? Working face-to-face with the public?

Working outdoors? Fixing things? \_\_\_\_\_

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What's the working environment like? Is it busy and bustling with people and chatter?

Or is it quiet and peaceful? \_\_\_\_\_

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Is every working day the same? Or is every day different? \_\_\_\_\_

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What part of your day do you enjoy the most? \_\_\_\_\_

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Where do you have lunch? Do other people join you for lunch? What sort of conversations

do you have with them? \_\_\_\_\_

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At what time does your ideal working day finish? \_\_\_\_\_

How much money does your ideal job pay? (Okay, come back down to earth with this one!)

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