

Asperger Traits Checklist (Adult Autism Self-Screen)

Checklist · 52 items · 8 sections

Asperger's syndrome was folded into autism spectrum disorder (ASD level 1) when the DSM-5 retired the term in 2013. Many adults still identify with the label because it describes a specific profile: autism without language delay or intellectual disability, often diagnosed late in adulthood. This checklist covers the DSM-5 social communication and restricted-interest criteria, the sensory profile that is common but not required for diagnosis, and the masking patterns adult women and high-IQ men often use to pass. Use as a self-screen to bring to a clinician trained in adult autism assessment.

Open the editable, AI-powered version online:

<https://genechecklist.com/checklist/asperger-traits-checklist>

SOCIAL COMMUNICATION

- Find small talk effortful and pointless, prefer depth or facts
HIGH
- Miss subtext, sarcasm, or jokes until you replay the conversation later
HIGH
- Hard to tell when it is your turn to speak or stop speaking
HIGH
- Conversations feel scripted in your head before they happen
HIGH
- Take statements literally and feel confused by figurative language
- Tone of voice sounds flat, monotone, or sing-song to others, not to you
- Eye contact feels intense, painful, or like it interrupts thinking
HIGH
- Forced to learn facial expressions and body language as a study subject
HIGH
- Friendships are few, deep, and built around shared interest, not chit-chat
- Group conversations are exhausting, one-on-one is much easier
HIGH
- Cannot read a room: arrive, miss the mood, say the wrong thing
HIGH
- Frequently called blunt, rude, or harsh when you meant to be honest

RESTRICTED INTERESTS

- Strong, narrow interests that absorb most of your free time
HIGH
- Talk in depth about your interest without noticing the listener tuning out
HIGH
- Collect, catalog, or systematize within the interest
- Childhood interests were intense and unusual for the age (timetables, dinosaurs, mechanics, language)
HIGH

ROUTINES AND SAMENESS

- Routines are calming, deviation from them is dysregulating
HIGH
- Order food the same way, drive the same route, follow the same morning sequence
HIGH
- Unexpected schedule changes feel disproportionately upsetting
HIGH
- Difficulty with transitions: end of an activity, end of a day, end of a place
- Specific food preferences around texture, temperature, or brand

SENSORY PROFILE

- Sensitive to fluorescent light, supermarket noise, or busy patterns
HIGH
- Clothing tags, seams, or fabrics distract until removed or changed
HIGH
- Specific sounds (chewing, ticking, certain pitches) cause physical distress
HIGH
- Strong smells (perfume, cleaning products) trigger headache or nausea
- Crave deep pressure: tight hugs, weighted blankets, snug clothing
- Unaware of body signals: hunger, thirst, bladder, until they spike
- Repetitive movements that self-soothe (rocking, finger tapping, pacing)

MASKING

- Pre-script social interactions like a play with stage directions
HIGH

- Copy mannerisms, phrases, or laughter patterns from peers
HIGH
- Watch TV and films to study how people behave socially
HIGH
- Need hours of decompression after a social event to recover
HIGH
- Cancel plans last-minute because the cost of attending feels too high
- Burnout after promotions, weddings, parenting newborn, or new social roles
HIGH
- Feel like a different person at home versus at work
HIGH

STRENGTHS

- Career success in detail-oriented or technical fields (engineering, accounting, IT, research, language)
- Strong pattern recognition, memory for facts and dates
- Direct, honest, low tolerance for office politics
- Loyalty in close relationships, strong sense of justice
- Capacity for deep, sustained focus on chosen work (monotropism)

DSM-5 CRITERIA

- Difficulties present in childhood, even if recognized only in hindsight
HIGH
- Persistent differences in social communication across contexts
HIGH
- Restricted, repetitive patterns of behavior, interests, or activities
HIGH
- Symptoms cause clinically significant impairment in important areas of life
HIGH
- Not better explained by intellectual disability or global developmental delay
HIGH

NEXT STEPS

- Take a longer-form screen (AQ-50, RAADS-R, CAT-Q) and note your scores
HIGH
- Find a clinician specifically experienced with adult autism, not just child autism
HIGH

- Bring childhood history: school reports, family observations, baby photos
- HIGH**
- Ask about overlap with ADHD, anxiety, depression, OCD, PTSD
- Diagnosis is identity-relevant for many adults but is not required to use accommodations
- Consider connecting with autistic-led communities (not parent-led) for peer perspective
- Reduce masking gradually in safe contexts and notice the energy difference