

## Brain Skills Overview

### Task Initiation

Brains that are strong in Task Initiation like to start projects when they show up. This brain likes to see action! This doesn't necessarily mean the task or project will get finished, it means that getting started may come naturally to you (completing these things requires other brain skills such as Sustained Attention and Goal-Directed Persistence). If you describe yourself as a procrastinator, your Task Initiation skill is probably low.

### Sustained Attention

Sustained Attention is about the brain's ability to focus. This is not necessarily difficult when we're doing something we want to be doing... this is really about focus in the face of boredom, repetition, and fatigue. A brain with strong Sustained Attention doesn't rely on a deadline to get things done and can even work with distractions in the room. Super strong Sustained Attention might also be called hyper-focus which is deep and intense concentration. Can you relate, or is your brain easily distracted?

### Goal-Directed Persistence

Brains that are strong in Goal-Directed Persistence like to see tasks and projects finished. If the To-Do list has 10 things on it, this brain is going to be compelled to get all 10 done - even if it means staying up until midnight. This brain wants to scratch those items off the list and will happily follow a goal to the end. If your brain is not strong in this skill, you might have a hard time saving money, completing post-graduate work or finishing home projects.

### Mental Flexibility

Mental Flexibility is about the brain's ability to go with the flow when the plan changes. Can you adapt mentally (and emotionally) to change? Brains with low Mental Flexibility can get "thrown for a loop" when the unexpected happens. These brains can also have a hard time hearing the opinions of others. Strong mental flexibility can be a real gift because it means you can adapt to change quickly but sometimes these brains are SO flexible, it can be hard to express an opinion. If your brain is very strong in this skill, grow complementary skills like Metacognition and Response Inhibition to support you.

### Working Memory

This skill is all about remembering and using relevant information while you are in the middle of something. Think: driving directions, complex instructions, writing an elaborate email, simple math... If this skill is strong, you may notice that it compensates for some of your weaker skills. Working Memory declines with age but there are excellent external tools and strategies that can be used to support this skill at any age.

## Organization

Organization is about the brain's ability to establish and maintain storage systems for physical "stuff", digital files and language (such as our ability to write in an organized way). At its core is the concept that everything needs a home. When your brain is strong in this skill, you can find things when you need them and your brain inherently knows how to set up organized systems. Some brains are strong in Organization as it relates to "stuff" but weak in Organization as it relates to writing. If Organization is not a strong skill, clutter and chaos can prevail.

## Planning & Prioritization

Planning and Prioritization is the brain's ability to take a complex project, break it into steps, and determine the priority of each step. Whether the project is physical, on the computer or in your head, a brain with strong Planning and Prioritization loves to jump in and figure out WHAT needs to happen and WHEN. Brains that are not strong in this skill feel overwhelmed by big projects because there is no clear path ahead.

## Time Management

The brain skill of Time Management is about the brain's ability to be aware of time: how long things take, the ability to stay within a timeframe, and an accurate internal awareness of the passage of time. Brains with a strong Time Management skill know what time it is without looking at a clock. They may not even need an alarm to wake up early. Does this sound like your brain or do you get "lost" in time?

## Metacognition

Metacognition literally means "thinking about my thinking" and is about the brain's ability to be self-aware. Do you reflect on your thoughts, actions, and surroundings or do you charge through life on auto-pilot? Metacognition is not about choosing one option over another - it's about being aware that there might be more than one option to choose from. The brain's ability to be self-aware is intricately connected to how present we are in the moment.

## Response Inhibition

The brain's ability to say "no" to yourself and follow-through is a valuable skill! A brain that is strong in Response Inhibition is a brain that can control impulses. When the body is well-rested, the ability to control impulses increases. You can tell if your Response Inhibition is low if you find yourself buying, eating or saying things that you later regret.