

My Strengths Explorer

Identifying your skills, talents and what you bring

A companion article and practical guide for career exploration, applications and interviews.

Why strengths can be hard to recognise

We often mistake a familiar ability for something everyone can do. A person who organises appointments for a relative may not describe themselves as organised; someone who researches a special interest may overlook their ability to find, compare and remember information. Strengths are not always visible on a certificate or job title.

Life experiences can provide meaningful evidence of skills. Employment, school, voluntary roles, caring responsibilities, community involvement and personal projects all offer examples. The important question is not only “What have I achieved?” but “What did I actually do?”

Skills, strengths and support needs

A skill is something you can do or develop, such as creating a spreadsheet. A strength is an ability you may draw on reliably in a suitable context, such as noticing patterns. An interest is something you are curious about. These overlap but are not identical.

You do not need to perform an ability effortlessly for it to count. Environmental barriers, disability, anxiety, fatigue and lack of opportunity may change how or when skills are available. Reasonable adjustments and the right tools can make an important difference.

Start with activities, not labels

Think of a time you solved a problem, helped another person, completed a project or learned something unfamiliar. Write down the situation, the actions you took and what happened as a result. You can use small, ordinary examples.

Reflection: What is one thing you have done that required effort, knowledge, care or judgement? Which parts were your contribution?

A broader picture of transferable skills

Communication: listening, checking understanding, writing clearly, explaining something, choosing a helpful way to share information. Communication does not need to mean fluent speech or eye contact.

Organisation: coordinating activities, using systems, prioritising, noticing deadlines, keeping records or adapting routines.

Problem-solving: spotting an obstacle, exploring options, testing solutions and learning from what did not work.

Creative thinking: finding new approaches, developing ideas, making, designing or noticing possibilities.

Working with others: sharing responsibilities, respecting boundaries, asking for help, understanding roles and offering appropriate support.

Digital and practical abilities: operating equipment, building things, using software, troubleshooting, researching or maintaining information.

Attention and care: noticing detail, following procedures, treating information respectfully, concentrating on a chosen task or working accurately.

Collect evidence instead of making big claims

A statement such as “I am excellent at teamwork” may feel uncomfortable or vague. It can be more useful to write: “During a group project, I kept a record of tasks and shared updates so that everyone knew what was happening.” This is specific and can be explained if an employer asks a follow-up question.

For a CV or application, connect the ability to a relevant task. For interviews, prepare one or two examples using a simple structure: the situation, what you needed to do, the action you took and what changed. The outcome can include learning, not only success.

Strengths without stereotypes

Avoid assuming that an autistic person must be detail-oriented, or that an ADHD person must be creative. People within any diagnostic group have different interests, talents, challenges and working preferences. Each profile should be built from the individual's own experience.

Reflection: List three strengths you recognise, the evidence for each and the conditions that help you use them.

Turn a strength into an application example

Imagine an applicant who helped organise a community event. They might identify planning, coordinating information, communicating with participants or responding to an unexpected change. Instead of listing every possible skill, choose the one that matches the job advert and support it with a truthful example.

Example CV wording: “Organised schedules and shared information with volunteers to support a local event.”

Example interview wording: “We had several activities taking place at once. I created a checklist, confirmed who was responsible for each task and updated the group when timings changed.”

When confidence makes recognition difficult

Low confidence does not mean a person has no strengths. A difficult school experience, unemployment, discrimination, burnout or repeated criticism may make it hard to recognise achievements. Begin with observation rather than self-praise. Ask: “What steps did I take?” and “What do other people ask me to help with?”

Feedback from a trusted person can offer another perspective, but you do not need to accept labels that do not fit your experience.

What helps strengths show up at work?

Consider pace, sensory environment, communication methods, access to information, travel, breaks, predictable routines, working patterns and available support. A suitable role is not determined by strengths alone; your wellbeing and practical needs matter too.

Your next steps

1. Choose two or three strengths that are relevant to work you are considering.
2. Write one truthful example for each strength.
3. Review a real job description and find where your evidence fits.
4. Identify support or adjustments that would help you contribute.
5. Use My Strengths Explorer to save a personal profile and review it as your experience grows.

Further support

Space to Breathe Therapy offers supportive resources for career exploration, neurodivergence, wellbeing and workplace accessibility. Visit spacetobreathetherapy.co.uk. For UK careers guidance, visit nationalcareers.service.gov.uk.

This is a reflective educational resource, not a psychometric assessment or individual employment advice.