

This is a real-life example of a sensory profile created by an autistic man in his late twenties. It was used to help himself and his support workers better understand his sensory needs and to develop coping strategies. Some minor edits have been made to protect privacy.

Touch / Tactile Sensitivity

These things irritate me, cause me pain, and make it hard to focus on anything else

- (-) labels on clothes
- (-) polo shirt collars
- (-) seams on socks
- (-) tight t-shirts
- (-) tight clothes around neck
- (-) scratchy/ coarse wool
- (-) badges on chest
- (-) heavy clothes, particularly coats/jackets

These make me feel more comfortable

- (+) loose/ v-necks
- (+) loose fitting t-shirts

When stressed or overwhelmed, the following helps calm me

- (+) playing with long sleeves
- (+) putting my hood up
- (+) lifting neck of shirt above my chin
- (+) washing my hands

These sensations can be soothing

- (+) soft blanket
- (+) holding pillow while sleeping
- (+) firm hugs (from people I know)
- (+) playing with dice
- (+) shuffling cards
- (+) playing with (cleaned) coins, or doing coin tricks
- (+) clicking or spinning a pen between my fingers

- (+) handling bread dough
- (+) petting or holding an animal
- (+) ripping paper
- (+) throwing ice against a wall

These sensations aren't especially soothing, but I find them pleasant

- (+) turning the page in a book
- (+) game controllers (smooth plastic, clicky buttons)
- (+) drinking cold water
- (+) the feeling of bubbles in a cold fizzy drink
- (+) juicy fruits (eg oranges)

I have a strong dislike of

- (-) strangers brushing past
- (-) being forced to be too close to people (eg crowded buses)
- (-) handshakes
- (-) polystyrene
- (-) messy hands – food, paint, dirt, etc
- (-) being barefoot
- (-) sand on my feet or between my toes
- (-) seaweed
- (-) streaky windows
- (-) raw meat
- (-) texture of rice
- (-) crispy foods (there's a difference between crispy and crunchy)
- (-) find sitting back in most chairs to be uncomfortable

I can be sensitive to temperature

- (-) hot weather
- (-) very cold weather
- (-) bath or shower temperature too high
- (-) very hot drinks
- (-) being splashed with, or swimming in, cold water
- (+) warm or cool water

I find these things difficult because of the way they feel

- (-) haircuts
- (-) brushing my teeth
- (-) dental work

Sound/ Auditory Sensitivity

I find it very difficult to separate sounds, so if there are two people talking at once, or someone talking while music is playing it can take me a while to process what they've said

Background noises affect my ability to focus - these are especially difficult for me:

- (-) build up of voices (eg in a busy cafe)
- (-) loud music
- (-) the sound of cars driving past
- (-) shouting
- (-) ticking clocks
- (-) babies crying or screaming
- (-) electricity

Some noises are **physically painful**

- (-) loud, sudden noises such as alarms, sirens, doorbells, or ringtones
- (-) people eating or slurping
- (-) mouth sounds made into a microphone
- (-) hand dryers or hoovers (mainly when someone else is using them)
- (-) high pitched sounds (eg 'mosquitos' outside shops)
- (-) rough wind against my ears
- (-) when a TV or radio is too loud (particularly adverts)

Loud, sudden noises will repeat, or 'ring' in my head long after the noise itself has stopped. This can be distressing and makes it very hard to refocus myself. When possible, give me some notice of sudden noises – for example if a fire alarm or drill is scheduled, giving me time to get my ear defenders can make a huge difference to me

These sounds are pleasurable

- (+) when I have my earphones playing ambient music and also my ear defenders on over the top so that external sound is blocked out entirely
- (+) cats purring
- (+) [pet] rats bruxing or eating near my ear
- (+) guided meditations
- (+) pink noise
- (+) music or podcasts I've chosen to listen to
- (+) tapping my fingers (others tapping their fingers annoys me, however)
- (+) videos of long train journeys – the sound of the train on the tracks is very soothing

Smell/ Olfactory Sensitivity

Overpowering smells can irritate me or are likely to cause me to shutdown

- (-) peanuts/ peanut butter
- (-) most aftershaves or strong perfumes
- (-) eggs
- (-) certain washing powders or fabric softeners
- (-) certain soaps, shower gels, shampoos, etc

Smells I enjoy

- (+) my own cooking
- (+) freshly baked cakes or bread
- (+) fresh herbs
- (+) oranges/ citrus fruits
- (+) coconut
- (+) hand creams/ moisturiser (coconut, cocoa butter)
- (+) herbal teas – especially camomile or mint

Taste/ Gustatory Sensitivity

Strong reactions

- (-) eggs
- (-) peanuts
- (-) anything remotely burnt
- (+) sweet things

Sight/ Visual Sensitivity

As with sound, it can take me a while to process things if there's too much visual information (eg crowds of people, lots of shops, lights, and lots of clashing colours)

Lights can cause great stress and pain

- (-) when lights are too bright
- (-) fluorescent lights
- (-) harsh, white light
- (-) flashing lights
- (-) flickering lights or screens
- (-) car headlights

- (+) I prefer the dark, or rooms with low lighting
- (+) soft orange or coloured lights are best

Wearing sunglasses can help reduce my sensitivity to

- (-) bright sunlight
- (-) low sunlight
- (-) overcast, with the sun shining from behind clouds
- (-) indoor lighting

I struggle with

- (-) eye contact (worse with strangers)
- (-) sleeping with light in the room
- (-) catching someone tapping or shaking their leg out of the corner of my eye
- (-) screens showing moving adverts in shopping centres/ windows (can be overwhelming or hard to process)

I tend to be quite good at noticing (sometimes unintentional) patterns in things (eg 'faces' in the pattern on a carpet)

(+/-) this can be a good distraction, but can sometimes just be too much visual information to process

I find these pleasing

- (+) watching clouds drift
- (+) looking at stars or planets in a clear sky
- (+) looking at fish in a tank
- (+) watching birds – particularly small fast ones like sparrows
- (+) reading
- (+) watching waves roll in on the beach

Balance/ Vestibular Issues

- (-) can lose my balance after turning too quickly
- (-) sometimes disoriented after bending or crouching
- (-) struggle with steep stairs

Good/enjoyable stims

- (+) flapping hands or rocking while stressed
- (+) rocking from the soles of my feet onto tiptoes and back
- (+) spinning or rotating in a chair
- (+) lifting my feet off the ground and rocking back and forth in a chair
- (+) swinging

Proprioception

(Perception of movement and position of the body)

- (-) Walking through crowds – judging the distance/ speed of other people relative to my own
- (-) people banging into me or stopping in front of me
- (-) judging my speed or stride when walking with someone
- (-) likely to trip over my own feet when walking with someone
- (-) people standing or sitting too close to me when I don't want them too
- (-) hard to use my hands when I'm not directly looking at something (eg tying laces)
- (-) will sometimes forget a step when walking up stairs
- (-) struggle with handwriting – combining letters, leaving out parts, or freezing up during the middle of a word
- (-) putting cups down – worried I'll slam it, so overcompensate by putting it down slowly and with effort
- (-) same as above but with doors
- (-) poor posture – while still, or walking
- (-) bumping into things when focused on something else
- (-) misjudge where my mouth is when drinking out of straws

- (+) it's more comfortable for me to sit on the edge of a chair
- (+) moving onto my tiptoes feels good
- (+) enjoy small/ enclosed spaces (eg cupboards) especially during times of high stress