

## **What is perfectionism?**

People with perfectionism hold themselves to impossibly high standards. They think what they do is never good enough.

Some people mistakenly believe that perfectionism is a healthy motivator, but that's not the case. Perfectionism can make you feel unhappy with your life. It can lead to depression, anxiety, eating disorders, and self-harm. Eventually, it can also lead you to stop trying to succeed. Even mild cases can interfere with your quality of life, affecting your personal relationships, education, or work.

Perfectionism can affect young people as well as adults. Children and teenagers are often driven to be overachievers in their schoolwork as well as activities such as sports, clubs, community service, and jobs. This can lead to an obsession with success.

Ultimately, it can interfere with the ability to achieve it.

## **What are the symptoms of perfectionism?**

A desire to achieve is healthy. But an irrational desire to always be perfect can cause problems.

You may be experiencing perfectionism if you:

- feel like you fail at everything you try
- procrastinate regularly — you might resist starting a task because you're afraid that you'll be unable to complete it perfectly
- struggle to relax and share your thoughts and feelings
- become very controlling in your personal and professional relationships

- . become obsessed with rules, lists, and work, or alternately, become extremely apathetic

## **What causes perfectionism?**

Perfectionism's cause isn't always clear. It's often a learned behavior. People with perfectionism believe that they're valuable only because of what they achieve or what they do for other people.

Academic settings can bring out perfectionism in young people.

## **How is perfectionism treated?**

As part of your perfectionism, you may strive to hide your personal problems. This can make it harder to treat. But remember, it's important to seek help when you need it. If perfectionism is interfering with your ability to live a full and happy life, speak to

your doctor or a mental health professional. If you're thinking of harming yourself or others, seek emergency medical attention.

Therapy, especially cognitive-behavioral therapy, may help you learn new ways of thinking about your goals and achievements. A therapist may help address your need for acceptance or reduce your reactions to negative feedback.

## **How can you avoid perfectionism?**

To lessen perfectionism, it may help to:

- set realistic, attainable goals
- break up overwhelming tasks into small steps
- focus on one activity or task at a time
- acknowledge that everyone makes mistakes
- recognize that most mistakes present learning opportunities

- confront fears of failure by remaining realistic about possible outcomes

If you suspect that perfectionism is interfering with your well-being, speak to your doctor. They may recommend therapy or other strategies to help manage your symptoms.

<https://www.healthline.com/health/perfectionism>