

General: Symptoms of SPD in Adults

Here is a very basic, traditional checklist for adults with SPD. The list may seem very long, but it is a condensed version that covers the full range of symptoms adults with Sensory Processing Disorder can have. All checklists are made to print well, so feel free to print this out and mark how often and/or severely you experience each of the following symptoms on a scale of 0 (never) to 4 (always/severe), or use P, if it was previously an issue that no longer presents itself in your daily life.

Sensory Modulation

General Modulation

- _____ have unusual eating habits (strong preferences, eating at odd times, etc.)
- _____ have unusual sleeping habits or sleep schedule
- _____ have great difficulty with transitions, be they major life changes or small everyday stuff (one activity to another, going from inside to outdoors, etc.)
- _____ become engrossed in one single activity for a long time and seem to tune out everything else
- _____ spend hours at a time on fantasy or video games and activities
- _____ very high or very low energy level
- _____ are resistant to change in your daily life and environment
- _____ may have turned to forms of substance abuse
- _____ drink excessive amounts of coffee or caffeinated beverages

Over-Responsiveness

- _____ bothered by clothes; certain materials, tags, seams, pantyhose, ties, belts, turtlenecks. May have to wear shorts, skirts, or pants exclusively, etc.
- _____ bothered by "light touch"; someone lightly touching/rubbing your hand, face, leg or back
- _____ excessively ticklish
- _____ distressed by others touching you; would rather be the "toucher" than the "touchee". This may lead to difficulty "snuggling" with your partner
- _____ very sensitive to pain, especially as compared to others
- _____ dislike the feeling of showers or getting splashed
- _____ difficulty going to the beach; the sand blowing on your skin or getting on your body
- _____ avoid touching anything "messy"; if you do, you have to go wash your hands right away and/or only touch it with your fingertips
- _____ can not wear new or "stiff" clothes that have not been washed or soaked in fabric softener

- _____ hate to be barefoot or hate to wear shoes and/or socks
- _____ frequently get car sick, air sick, motion sick
- _____ difficulty riding on elevators, escalators, or moving sidewalks
- _____ avoid amusement park rides that drop, climb, spin, or go upside down
- _____ difficulty eating foods with mixed textures, or one particular texture
- _____ prefer very bland foods, dislike anything spicy
- _____ become nauseated or gag from certain cooking, cleaning, perfume, public restroom, or bodily odours
- _____ become overstimulated or over-aroused when people come to the house or when in crowded places
- _____ overly exited/aroused in group settings
- _____ avoid crowds and hide or disappear when guests come over
- _____ sensitive to noises that other people do not seem bothered by (clocks, refrigerators, fans, people talking, blenders, vacuum cleaners, animals, outdoor construction, etc.)
- _____ easily distracted by auditory or visual stimuli
- _____ can not attend certain public events or places due to excessive noise
- _____ overreact to loud noises, like sirens
- _____ can't sleep if room isn't completely dark
- _____ fearful of heights
- _____ bothered by hands or face being dirty

Under-Responsiveness

- _____ may fail to recognize stimuli that most would find alerting or strong
- _____ unable to identify foods that have gone bad by smell
- _____ difficulty being able to smell dangerous smells, i.e., smoke, noxious/hazardous solvents, or if something is burning in the stove or oven
- _____ don't seem to notice pain; get shots/cuts/bruises and hardly feel a thing
- _____ lethargic, hard to get going, appear "lazy" and unmotivated
- _____ don't seem to notice if your hands or face are dirty
- _____ don't seem to get dizzy
- _____ have a hard time feeling parts of your body, as though they aren't there
- _____ difficulty waking up in the morning (may not even notice alarm clock)

Sensory Seeking

- _____ have to fidget and "fiddle" with things all the time; change in your pocket, your keys, a pen/pencil, paper clip, rubber band, anything within reach
- _____ often touching and twisting your own hair
- _____ are a thrill seeker; love fast and/or dangerous rides, leisure activities, and sports
- _____ seek out fast, spinning, and/or upside-down carnival rides
- _____ will often rock or sway body back and forth while seated or standing still
- _____ frequently tip chair on back two legs
- _____ restless when sitting through a lecture, presentation, or movie
- _____ constantly chew on pens and pencils, chew gum, or smoke cigarettes
- _____ prefer foods with very strong tastes and flavours
- _____ constantly bite nails or fingers
- _____ bite lips or inside of cheeks
- _____ frequently shake your leg while sitting or falling asleep
- _____ love to sleep with multiple or heavy blankets on top of you
- _____ seek out crashing and "squishing" activities
- _____ crack knuckles often
- _____ love crunchy foods (popcorn, carrots, chips, nuts, pretzels, etc.)
- _____ have an "endless" supply of air fresheners, scented candles, odour masking sprays, etc.
- _____ identify objects by smell, have to smell everything, judge whether you like something or someone by smell
- _____ great difficulty settling body down for sleep
- _____ love to touch and be touched, have to touch everything

Sensory Discrimination

- _____ can't identify objects by feel if your eyes are closed
- _____ difficulty finding things in your purse or pocket without looking
- _____ difficulty heating food to the correct temperature, feeling if it is too hot or too cold
- _____ difficulty locating items in a cupboard, drawer, in your closet, or on a grocery shelf
- _____ difficulty with recognizing/interpreting/following traffic signs
- _____ difficulty judging distances about where your car is in relation to other cars, in parking spaces, or near a curb (fail miserably at parallel parking!!)

- _____ difficulty merging into oncoming traffic on road, rotary, or highway
- _____ get disoriented and/or lost easily in stores, buildings, hiking, etc.
- _____ difficulty concentrating on or watching a movie/tv show when there is background noise or distractions
- _____ difficulty remembering or understanding what people are telling you
- _____ difficulty following directions if given two or three at one time
- _____ can not complete concentrated tasks if noises present
- _____ talks too loud or too soft
- _____ difficulty licking an ice cream cone neatly
- _____ difficulty with speech and annunciation
- _____ bump into things frequently
- _____ often push too hard on objects, accidentally breaking them
- _____ difficulty judging how much pressure to apply when doing tasks or picking something up
- _____ difficulty identifying which key on your ring belongs to what
- _____ often reverse numbers and letters or process them backwards
- _____ difficulty telling time on an analogue clock
- _____ difficulty reading and understanding a map, bus schedule, directions
- _____ difficulty organizing and grouping things by categories, similarities, and/or differences
- _____ can't reading text on computer screens
- _____ difficulty distinguishing different tastes and/or flavours of food and/or drink items
- _____ difficulty lining up numbers correctly for math problems and/or balancing a checkbook

Sensory-Based Motor Abilities

- _____ have difficulty learning to ride a bike or other moving equipment
- _____ clumsy, uncoordinated, and accident prone
- _____ difficulty walking on uneven surfaces
- _____ difficulty with fine motor tasks such as buttoning, zipping, tying, knitting, sewing, playing games with small parts, closing zip lock bags
- _____ confuse your right and left sides
- _____ prefer sedentary tasks, avoiding sports or physical activities
- _____ difficulty with handwriting; hard to read, write slowly, get wrist cramps
- _____ frequently bump into people and things

- _____ easily fatigued with physical tasks
- _____ frequently miss when putting objects on a table
- _____ messy eater, difficulty using eating utensils, spilling and dropping food frequently
- _____ often knock drinks or other things over when reaching for them
- _____ frequently drop items
- _____ feel the need to talk yourself through tasks
- _____ often hum or talk to self while concentrating on a task
- _____ significant difficulty learning to tie things (shoes, bags, etc.)
- _____ difficulty with motor tasks requiring several steps
- _____ difficulty learning new motor tasks (a new dance, sport or exercise activity, how to drive, etc.)
- _____ lose balance frequently, maybe even when standing still
- _____ significant difficulty learning to type without looking at the keyboard

Social and Emotional

- _____ dislike changes in plans or routines, needing structure
- _____ often described as "stubborn", "defiant", or "uncooperative"
- _____ are very emotional and sensitive, may also be prone to crying
- _____ can't seem to finish anything
- _____ have difficulty making decisions
- _____ are seen as rigid and controlling
- _____ prefer solitary activities rather than group participation
- _____ are often impatient and/or impulsive
- _____ don't always register or understand social cues and non verbal language
- _____ difficulty with authority figures
- _____ trouble relating to and socializing with peers and colleagues
- _____ have difficulty accepting defeat or forgiving yourself
- _____ frequently get strong feelings of anger or rage
- _____ easily frustrated
- _____ needs sameness and routines; needs to know what to expect
- _____ get frequent panic or anxiety attacks

- _____ have many fears and/or phobias
- _____ OCD-type qualities; can't let foods touch each other on your plate, have to wear clothes a certain way, or other obsessions and compulsions.
- _____ are easily distractible and often unorganized
- _____ hate surprises
- _____ difficulty seeking out and maintaining relationships
- _____ avoid eye contact

Internal Regulation

- _____ difficulty falling asleep or getting on a sleep schedule
- _____ heart rate issues, including: unnecessary speeding, not slowing down when at rest, or not speeding up for tasks that require a higher heart rate
- _____ respiration too fast or slow for the appropriate state of arousal
- _____ over or under sensitive to bowel and bladder sensations
- _____ over or under sensitive to the sensations of hunger and thirst
- _____ irregular, inconsistent bowel, bladder and appetite sensations
- _____ difficulty with temperature regulation of body

The above checklist was edited by Dan Travis and reposted from sensory-processing-disorder.com with the original author's permission.