

Social Support Questionnaire

Name: _____ Date: _____

Social support is defined as having a network of people that support your endeavors, contribute positively to your decision-making processes, and are there for you when you need help. Scientists have suggested that people with this kind of network around them can transcend even the worst environments and accomplish great things. Unfortunately, people who don't have this type of network have a harder time accomplishing even modest goals. Remember this: who you are today and who you become in the future has a lot to do with whom you choose to spend your time.

The following questions are designed to assess your level of social support, which strongly influences how well you follow any nutrition or exercise program. Simply answer the questions below by selecting the response most appropriate to your situation. Once you've completed all the questions, your score will be calculated. And remember, be honest. You're doing this exercise to find the areas of your life that might present challenges to your progress.

A word of caution: once you recognize your challenges it's easy to blame them for your outcomes. Don't do this. Outside factors can affect you – if you let them. But you're in control. You have the power to place yourself in the right environment, so use it!

SOCIAL SUPPORT QUESTIONNAIRE

QUESTIONS:

RESPONSES AND SCORING

1. Do the people with whom you spend each day (at work or at home) follow healthy lifestyle habits such as exercising regularly, watching what they eat, and taking nutritional supplements?	a) Yes, most of them do. (+3) b) About half do and half don't. (0) c) No, most of them don't. (-3)
2. Does your spouse or partner follow healthy lifestyle habits such as exercising regularly, watching what s/he eats, and taking nutritional supplements?	a) Yes, my spouse/partner does. (+5) b) No, my spouse/partner doesn't. (-5) c) I don't have a spouse or partner. (0)
3. When you want to perform some physical activity such as going for a workout or taking a hike, is it easy for you to find a partner to go with you?	a) Yes, it's easy to find a partner. (+2) b) Yes, but very infrequently. (0) c) No, they never do. (-4)
4. At your workplace, do your coworkers regularly bring in treats like cookies, donuts, and other snacks?	a) Yes, they often do. (-4) b) Yes, but I typically don't indulge (0) c) No, they don't (+5)
5. If you go out to eat more than once per week, do the people you dine with order healthy selections?	a) Yes, they always do. (+2) b) Only about half of the time. (0) c) No, they never do. (-2)
6. Do you belong to any clubs, groups, or teams that meet at least twice per week and do some physical exercise (this does not include a health club membership)?	a) Yes, I've been a member for years. (+5) b) Yes, I've just started. (+2) c) No, I don't. (0)
7. Do you belong to a health club and attend, on average, at least three times per week?	a) Yes, I've been doing this for at least 1 year. (+2) b) Yes, I've just joined. (+1) c) No, I don't. (0)

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QUESTIONS:

RESPONSES AND SCORING

8. When discussing your nutrition and exercise goals with friends, do they seem interested in getting on board, or do they think you're crazy?	a) They're very interested. (+2) b) They're not interested. (0) c) They think I'm crazy. (-2)
9. Do the people you live with bring home foods that aren't considered healthy or good for you?	a) Always (-5) b) Sometimes (-3) c) Never (0)
10. Do the people you live with bring home foods that are considered healthy or good for you?	a) Always (+5) b) Sometimes (0) c) Never (-5)
11. Do the people you live with or work with schedule activities for you that interfere with your pre-established exercise time?	a) Always; they don't respect my time. (-3) b) Sometimes; they don't think about it. (-1) c) Never; they respect this time. (+3)
12. Do those around you bring nutrition, exercise, or supplement information to your attention so that you can stay informed about these topics?	a) Always (+5) b) Sometimes (+2) c) Never (0)

YOUR SCORE AND WHAT IT MEANS

28 to 38 total points:

Congratulations! You've got a great support network around you. Of course, that's not all you'll need to succeed with a good nutrition and exercise program, but it's a great start. Even though you may have scored relatively high on this questionnaire, remember that social support works both ways: in order to make sure you keep this great group of people around you, you'll have to offer support to them as well.

5 to 19 total points:

It looks like you've got some social support around you but there are obviously a few areas of your life that will present challenges. Be aware of workplace challenges, at-home challenges, and relationship challenges that might stand in your way. Make sure to review the potential problems above and come up with creative ways to improve the social environment around you.

4 to -14 total points:

Your social support is lacking and needs a makeover. While some of your environment isn't conducive to your goals, there are some areas that you can begin to explore. Identify which areas are deficient above, then take steps to fix them. Join a health club, dine with friends committed to health, spend time doing nonfood-related things with your other friends, and avoid the donut tray at work. And remember, although it's easy to blame those around you for not being as supportive as you'd like, choosing new exercise and nutrition goals is your own choice, not necessarily theirs. Instead of blaming them, simply come up with creative and non-antagonistic ways to enlist their support.

-15 to -31 total points:

This score is quite low and therefore signals some real problems in your work and at-home environments, as well as in your relationships. Of course, some people have been known to succeed in reaching their goals by going it alone. But succeeding with a "lone ranger" mentality is too difficult for most to accomplish. Without some serious changes, your environment will almost certainly cause your old habits to surface. Important changes may include: having a serious talk with your friends and family in order to express to them how important this is to you, going out immediately and joining a club or group that meets for regular exercise, or finding a workout partner that is as motivated as you are. And remember, although it's easy to blame those around you for not being as supportive as you'd like, instead of blaming them, simply come up with creative and non-antagonistic ways to enlist their support. Of course, if it comes down to it, pick some new friends. Your social group is one of the most important variables in your success.