

## 5 Simple Steps to Finding Your Ideal Career

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1. Find your personality type, which will show you general descriptions of the types of tasks that you prefer.
2. Get a list of specific careers that match these descriptions.
3. Research the details of these careers to find the ones you are most interested in.
4. Contact people who are currently working in these careers so you can get a better understanding of what it's like.
5. Once you've chosen a career, acquire the necessary skills, if necessary. While you're doing this you can identify the companies which may need the skills you are developing and form a relationship with them.

Both free and fee-based approaches are presented.

### Step 1 – Find Your Personality Type

The good news is that there are so many kinds of careers out there (over 900 at this writing, with more being created all the time\*) that it's almost certain that several are ideal for you.

The bad news is that there are so many kinds of careers out there that, unless you have an organized way of searching, you probably will never find those that are ideal for you.

John Holland proposed a solution for this problem in 1958 that now pervades career counseling research and practice: he found that personalities seek out and flourish in career environments they fit and that jobs and career environments are classifiable by the personalities that flourish in them ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holland\\_Codes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holland_Codes))

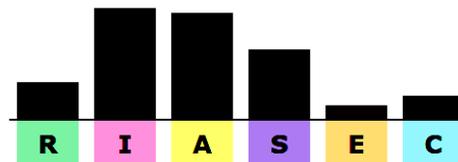
Holland found that there are six basic personality types:

- **Realistic (Doers):** A realistic person prefers concrete tasks. They like working alone or with other realistic people. Some of the careers included in this category are engineer, plumber, audio and video equipment technician, chemist, dentist, furniture finisher, and rail car repairer.
- **Investigative (Thinkers):** Someone who is investigative likes to use their abstract or analytical skills to figure things out. They are a "thinker" who strives to complete tasks and often prefers to do so independently. These are a few investigative occupations: sociologist, scientist, psychologist, and economist.
- **Artistic (Creators):** Artistic people like to create things and are imaginative. Artistic occupations include creative writer, performing artist (including actor, singer, and dancer), photographer, and fashion designer.
- **Social (Helpers):** A social person prefers interacting with people. They tend to be concerned with social problems and want to help others. Social occupations include home health aide, certified nurse's aide, RN, licensed practical nurse, social worker, occupational therapist assistant or aide, teacher, and clergy member.
- **Enterprising (Persuaders):** Those who are enterprising lean toward leadership roles. They are willing to take on challenges and are extroverted, as well as aggressive. Enterprising occupations include restaurant host or hostess, retail salesperson, attorney, chief executive, chef, and wholesale or retail buyer.

- **Conventional (Organizers):** Someone who is conventional prefers structured tasks and tending to details and is often conservative. Conventional occupations include accountant, bookkeeper, actuary, cost estimator, human resources assistant, and loan officer.

### How do you find your personality type?

The Department of Labor’s **O\*NET Interest Profiler** is a free online test that will show your dominant personality type, along with your secondary and tertiary types; an example of its output is shown to the right.



The example shows that the test-taker has the **RIASEC** codes **IAS** (Investigative, Artistic, and Social), and would be best suited to jobs that have those codes.

The test is available at

<https://www.mynextmove.org/explore/ip>

Realistic	8
<b>Investigative</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Artistic</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Social</b>	<b>15</b>
Enterprising	3
Conventional	5

### Step 2 – Get a List of Specific Careers

Once you’ve taken the test and know your **RIASEC** codes, go to the **O\*NET Online Interest Search** at <https://www.onetonline.org/find/descriptor/browse/Interests/>, click on your primary **RIASEC** code, enter your secondary and tertiary codes, then click **GO**.

The careers that match your codes will be displayed on a screen like this:

**Have a three-letter interest code?** You can focus your search by choosing up to three interest areas, to see the occupations with choices.

First interest: I — Investigative    Second interest: A — Artistic    Third interest: S — Social    **Go**

Want to discover your interests? Take the [O\\*NET Interest Profiler](#) at My Next Move.

### Investigative, Artistic, Social

Save Table: [XLSX](#) [CSV](#)

23 occupations shown    Show Job Zones: **All** 1 2 3 4 5

Interest Code	Job Zone	Code	Occupation
SAI	4	29-1129.02	<a href="#">Music Therapists</a> <span style="color: orange;">🌟 Bright Outlook</span>
IAS	5	19-3094.00	<a href="#">Political Scientists</a>
IAS	5	19-3041.00	<a href="#">Sociologists</a>
ISA	5	19-3033.00	<a href="#">Clinical and Counseling Psychologists</a> <span style="color: orange;">🌟</span>
ISA	5	29-1223.00	<a href="#">Psychiatrists</a> <span style="color: orange;">🌟</span>
SIA	5	25-1062.00	<a href="#">Area, Ethnic, and Cultural Studies Teachers, Postsecondary</a>
SIA	5	25-1053.00	<a href="#">Environmental Science Teachers, Postsecondary</a>
SIA	5	25-1192.00	<a href="#">Family and Consumer Sciences Teachers, Postsecondary</a>
SIA	5	29-9092.00	<a href="#">Genetic Counselors</a> <span style="color: orange;">🌟</span>
SIA	5	25-1125.00	<a href="#">History Teachers, Postsecondary</a>

### Step 3 – Research the Details of These Careers

You can get started by clicking the blue link in the **Occupation** column on the above screen and round out your search with your own methods.

#### Fee-Based Services

While the above free tests should give you a fairly good idea of how to use **RIASEC** codes, you may want to use one or more of these professional tests in a serious career search:

- **Career Key Discovery for Individuals**  
<https://www.careerkey.org/career-tests/take-career-test-career-assessment>
- **CareerHQ (Australasia)**  
<https://careerhq.com.au/personal/>
- **Colby College Personality Lab** (in particular, the Big 5 Inventory by Dr. Soto)  
<http://www.colby.edu/psych/personality-lab/>
- **Dependable Strengths**  
<https://www.dependablestrengths.org/>
- **Explore My Purpose - Zoe** (3 valid assessments are offered in this one product: Career Key Discovery, Gallup StrengthsFinder, and Acclaro Values)  
<https://www.exploremypurpose.com/>
- **Kuder**  
<https://www.kuder.com/>
- **Motivated Skills Assessment**  
<https://www.careerkey.org/fit/self-assessment/motivated-job-skills-assessment>
- **Self-Directed Search**  
<https://self-directed-search.com/>

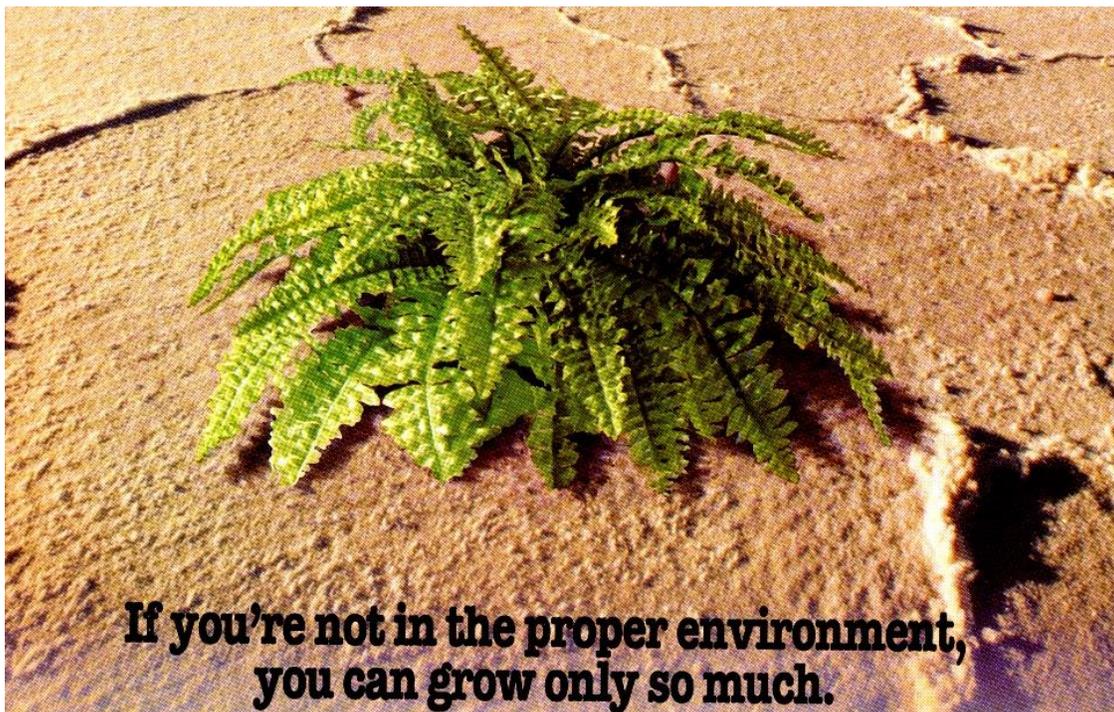
### Step 4 - Contact people who are currently working in these careers

Let's say you've decided you want to be an Operations Research Analyst, Hydrologist, or Ergonomist; how should you proceed?

Based on your research you could arbitrarily pick one and acquire the necessary skills, but wouldn't it be nice if you could meet people who are already established in these fields and benefit from their experience? Maybe find out what path took them to this point in their career, or even visit them on the job? Most importantly, you may develop a relationship with people who are already working in the area that you are interested in and may someday be interested in hiring.

Such a scenario would be possible using a professional networking site such as LinkedIn. To use the site effectively, you would need to:

- Create a profile that focuses on your skills, the problems that you can (or would like to) solve. (See <https://player.vimeo.com/video/133699265?byline=false&portrait=false&title=false> )
- Understand the overwhelming emotional impact of your profile photo. (See <https://player.vimeo.com/video/133699138?byline=false&portrait=false&title=false> )
- Search the site for members who are already in the careers you are interested in.  
In general, you can find out how to do this by using Google to search for “**How do I search for people with a specific job title on <site name>?**” If you are using LinkedIn you can go to [help.linkedin.com](http://help.linkedin.com) or see **How to Search LinkedIn by Job Title** at <https://www.dummies.com/article/business-careers-money/careers/job-searches/how-to-search-linkedin-by-job-title-155993/>
- Follow these people to have their posts sent to you; some people take notice of the people following them.
- Research and understand the value of connecting to other members and extending your network of connections.
- Learn to send an invitation to connect in such a way that the person receiving the invitation is likely to accept it. Just because you are doing this online doesn't mean you are exempt from the normal rules of human interaction; how would you feel if a stranger walked up to you on the street and said nothing but, “I would like to stay in touch with you.”? If they prefaced their request with an explanation (such as a comment on something you've written or why they are interested in your job) you would be much more likely to accept their request. Once you are connected to people in the careers you are interested in you can continue to develop the relationship and gain a better understanding of the career you have chosen.



## Step 5 - Identify Companies Which Need Your Skills

Again, a site like LinkedIn can help you do this. Don't just focus on job openings—research and identify companies you would like to work for and reach out to employees of this company. Eventually jobs will open at this company, and if the contacts you have already made can vouch for you, you will be very far ahead of the game.

Becoming familiar with the search capabilities of LinkedIn (see [linkedin.com/help/linkedin/answer/a523136](https://www.linkedin.com/help/linkedin/answer/a523136)) is critical to unlocking the full power of LinkedIn.

\* <https://www.mynextmove.org/> <https://www.onetonline.org/>

Both sites are sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor

The O\*NET Program is the primary source of occupational information in the U.S. Valid data are essential to understanding the rapidly changing nature of work and how it impacts the workforce and U.S. economy. Central to the project is the O\*NET database, containing hundreds of standardized and occupation-specific descriptors on almost 1,000 occupations covering the entire U.S. economy. The database, which is available to the public at no cost, is continually updated from input by a broad range of workers in each occupation.