

Type A personality

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In some [psychological](#) theories, the **Type A personality**, also known as the *Type A Behavior Pattern*, is a set of characteristics that includes being impatient, excessively time-conscious, insecure about one's status, highly competitive, hostile and aggressive, and incapable of relaxation.^[1] Type A individuals are often highly achieving [workaholics](#) who multi-task, drive themselves with deadlines, and are unhappy about the smallest of delays. Although they may exhibit some or all of these characteristics, it does not mean that people with the type A personality are incapable of showing love, affection or other types of non-pessimistic behavior. Many are also capable of "couching" some of these behavior attributes with proper treatment and medication. Those who do not seek treatment have been described as *stress junkies*, and often display some of the following characteristics:

1. An intrinsic insecurity or insufficient level of [self-esteem](#), which is considered to be the root cause of the syndrome. This is believed to be covert and therefore less observable.
2. Time urgency and impatience, which causes irritation and exasperation.
3. Free floating hostility, which can be triggered even over little incidents.^[2]

The **Type B personality**, in contrast, is patient, relaxed, and easy-going. There is also a Type AB mixed profile for people who cannot be clearly categorized and have a combination of both types of personality.

Assessment

Type A personality was originally assessed by a 15 minute, structured interview that examined both verbal and nonverbal behavior. This time-consuming method has been largely replaced by the [Jenkins activity survey](#), a paper-and-pencil questionnaire first published in 1979. Some researchers have suggested that the questionnaire lacks the validity of the structured interview.

Health implications

Type A behavior was first described as a potential risk factor in coronary disease in the 1950s by cardiologists [Meyer Friedman](#) and R. H. Rosenman. After a nine-year study of over 3,000 healthy men, aged 35-59, Friedman & Rosenman estimated that Type A behavior doubles the risk of coronary heart disease in otherwise healthy individuals. This research had an enormous effect in stimulating the development of the field of [health psychology](#), in which psychologists look at how a person's mental state affects his or her physical health.

[\[edit\]](#) Criticism

Type A theory has been criticized on a few grounds. [Psychometrically](#), the behaviors that define the syndrome are not highly correlated, indicating that this is a grouping of separate tendencies, not a coherent pattern or type. Researchers have also found that Type A behavior and coronary heart disease do not share a common genetic marker in [Sardinians](#).^[3] **According to research by Redford Williams of Duke University, the hostility component of Type A personality is the only significant risk factor.**^[4] **Thus, it is a high level of expressed [anger](#) and hostility, not the other elements of Type A behavior, that constitute the problem.** For these reasons, Type A theory is considered to be obsolete by many researchers in contemporary health psychology and [personality psychology](#).