

What's your learning style?

We all have different styles of learning. Find out which type of learner you are by answering the questions below.

1. You're at a wedding and other guests start doing a square dance, do you:

- a) Sit the first dance out while you try to figure out the different patterns that are formed by partners weaving in and out.
- b) Maybe join in after watching a few dances or you may sit them all out, as you don't really feel comfortable about joining in without a proper chance to practice first.
- c) Sit the first dance out and quiz an experienced barn-dancer about some of the different steps, perhaps asking them to do a quick practice with you in a quiet corner.
- d) Have a go, finding out what to do from the caller and other dancers.

2. You get a new mobile phone with lots of features that you don't fully understand, do you:

- a) Read the instruction book with great care before doing anything.
- b) Take plenty of time getting to know all the functions, with the use of the instruction book, before you start using it in earnest. You also practice using the functions in a situation where you know it does not matter if you get it wrong.
- c) Ask the person selling you the phone to explain how to use each feature, and enquire about the most useful buttons. You start using it as soon as you can.
- d) Press all the buttons until something happens.

3. You are going camping and you have been lent a tent by a friend, do you:

- a) Ask for the instructions that come with the tent, read them thoroughly and make notes to take you through the simple steps when you are out in the field.
- b) Read through the instructions and ask your friend to demonstrate how to put it up a week before you go. And then you have a few practice goes yourself to make sure you are not caught out when you go away.
- c) Ask your friend to show you how to put the tent up, and quiz them about where to pitch it, how to keep out the rain and how to keep

warm.

d) Fold the tent away in its packaging and get it out for the first time when you are on the camp site, pitching it as best you can.

4. You want to improve your garden and have decided you need a low brick wall between your patio and the lawn. Do you:

- a) Buy a brick-laying book to learn about the best way of doing it yourself, but feel tempted to pay someone else to do it.
- b) Enrol on a short brick-laying course so that you can practice in safety before having a go at building it yourself.
- c) Ask a friend who is a builder for some advice before having a go yourself.
- d) Buy some bricks and mortar and start building the wall.

5. A friend has asked you to join their pub-quiz team. How do you prepare?

- a) Ask lots of questions about how the pub quiz operates so that you are clear about what happens.
- b) Spend a lot of time testing yourself with general knowledge quiz books, perhaps asking a friend to quiz you before the real pub quiz.
- c) Ask a friend for useful tips on preparing for the quiz.
- d) Turn up on the night of the pub-quiz and look forward to the challenge.

Mostly a - You are a theorist who likes to understand the reason behind something, grasping the concepts, before having a go.

Mostly b - You are a reflector. You like to think things out before you have a go, and you like to learn by watching others.

Mostly c - You are a pragmatist who likes to have practical tips and techniques from someone with experience before you have a go.

Mostly d - You are an activist you like to leap up and have a go, learning by doing.

All these styles are useful when it comes to learning.

Perhaps the most useful ability, however, is to be able to use all these learning styles, depending on the situation. The Activist in us is not worried about trying out something new or different. The Reflector in us reviews the experience and makes sure we have learnt a lesson for the next time. The Theorist in us accepts or rejects the experience. The Pragmatist applies it in other circumstances.

This is just an introduction to learning styles. To find out more visit www.peterhoney.com