

What is Imposter Syndrome?

Feelings of doubts about your own abilities, skills and achievements. People who experience Imposter Syndrome often feel like they are a fraud. Other examples of how it can present itself (non-exhaustive):

- Not feeling smart or competent enough, downplaying your skills
- Being under the impression that you are underachieving or not living up to expectations
- Dismissing your achievements and attributing them to external factors such as luck, rather than your own abilities



If you are unsure whether you are experiencing imposter syndrome, here is a test you could take: [Clance Impostor Phenomenon Score \(nickol.as\)](https://nickolas.com/clance-impostor-phenomenon-score/)

Some tips and advice that could help you overcome Imposter Syndrome:

1. Share how you feel (whether it's with friends, family, a supervisor, etc.)

Recognising and acknowledging those feelings is the first step in being able to break your negative thought patterns and overcome them. Imposter Syndrome is incredibly common, in and outside of academia and at all career stages (even senior positions). Don't be afraid to ask for help and advice! Chances are the person you talk to has experienced something similar.

"Being honest with those around you about how you feel, I have found people are then honest back and you find a lot of people are feeling the same as you."

"Sometimes the 'imposter feeling' can be an indication that something else is wrong e.g., don't feel included in the lab or something – so it's good to talk about this with other people!"

2. View situations as a learning opportunity

If you find yourself in a position where you feel like you do not have the knowledge, or the skills, try to change your perspective and approach the situation as a learning opportunity.

"Something I tell myself often: It's better to be the least smart person in a room than the smartest. If you're the smartest, then there's no opportunity to learn and grow."

"Agreed! I try and see an intimidating meeting as an amazing opportunity to pick the brains of someone who knows a lot!"

3. Keep positive comments and feedback

"I keep a document with compliments and positive feedback I've had from colleagues, supervisors and tutors to read through whenever I feel I've misled people into thinking I'm competent."

4. Focus on your own development

No one's path is the same, we each learn and grow at different speeds.

"Try not to compare yourself to others: Everyone has highs and lows, skills and weaknesses, and each [project] is unique."

"I was trying to prove myself to others. It helped a lot when I started trying to prove myself to me."

5. Give yourself some credit

"[Remember] that you've got this far - so even if you have weaknesses, you've been able to overcome them before"

"Someone once told me to steer into the skid – if you feel like an imposter tell yourself yes you are and you're such a great imposter that you are actually not an imposter."

