

# Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS; Deiner Scale)

## Assessment Overview

### Assessment Area

**ICF Domain:**  
Quality of Life

### You Will Need

**Length:**  
5 minutes, 5 items  
**Scoring:**  
Items scored 1-7. Total score (5-35) is sum of all items.

### Summary

The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) is a generic self-report quality of life scale, designed to address the concept of life satisfaction as a whole rather than to assess satisfaction with sub-dimensions of life (Diener et al. 1985).

It measures the “discrepancy or balance” between one’s life achievements and expectations. Participants respond to the items of the SWLS on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7). One item on the questionnaire is potentially sensitive.

### Availability

**Worksheet:** Can be found [here](#).

**Languages:** English and many other languages.

## Assessment Interpretability

### Minimal Clinically Important Difference

Not established in SCI

### Statistical Error

**Standard Error of Measurement:**  
4.67

**Minimal Detectable Change:**  
12.95

(Calculated from Dijkers 1999; n=2183; 1766 males, 417 females; 1-20 years post-SCI)

### Typical Values

#### Mean (SD) Values:

Item 1:	3.76(2.06)
Item 2:	3.75(2.01)
Item 3:	4.34(2.02)
Item 4:	4.28(2.01)
Item 5:	3.29(2.10)
Total:	19.4(7.9)

(NSCID records; Dijkers 1999; n=2183; 1766 males, 417 females; 1-20 years post-SCI)

#### Threshold Values:

Very high satisfaction: 35-30  
High satisfaction: 29-25  
Average satisfaction: 24-20  
Slightly below average: 19-15  
Dissatisfied: 14-10  
Extremely dissatisfied: 9-5

(Diener 2006)

## Measurement Properties

### Validity – **Low** to **High**

**High correlation with Assistive Technology Device Predisposition Assessment (ATD-PA) QOL Subset:**  
Correlation = 0.89

**High correlation with Brief Symptom Inventory (BSI):**  
Correlation = -0.64  
(Scherer & Cushman 2001; n=20; 10 males, 10 females; paraplegia and tetraplegia, acute SCI)

**Low to Moderate correlation with Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9):**  
PHQ Affective subscore correlation = -0.368 to -0.463  
PHQ Somatic subscore correlation = -0.248 to -0.346  
(Richardson & Richards 2008; n=2570; traumatic SCI; 1-25 years post-injury)

**Number of studies reporting validity data: 7**

### Reliability – **Moderate** to **High**

#### **Moderate Test-retest Reliability:**

Correlation = 0.65

(93-626 day interval, median 347 days; Dijkers 1999; n=2183; 1766 males, 417 females; 1-20 years post-SCI)

#### **High Internal Consistency:**

$\alpha = 0.92$

(Krause et al. 2009; n=727; 70.2% males, traumatic SCI, 53.3% cervical injuries; mean time since injury = 18.2 years)

#### **High Internal Consistency:**

$\alpha = 0.85$

\*increase from 0.85 to 0.86 when item 5 was removed  
(Amtmann et al. 2019; n=17897 participants with SCI, TBI, or burn injury; n=8566 with SCI; tetraplegia and paraplegia; mean age 38.94 years)

**Number of studies reporting reliability data: 5**

## Responsiveness

**Floor/Ceiling Effect:**  
Not established in SCI

**Effect Size:**  
Not established in SCI

**Number of studies reporting responsiveness data: 0**