



Anita Chaperon



James Schramko

Handy Guide to DNA Testing

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Advancements in science have made the process of DNA testing so simple that you as a consumer can now gain access to your own DNA data without hassle, in a matter of weeks.

Why have your DNA tested? From the data in your DNA you can find out:

What percentage of your DNA is from populations around the world. Are you fifty percent Irish with a touch of Viking? How much German ancestry do you have? Find out what races are in your genetic makeup.

Who is related to you from around the world or across the street. Used in synch with certain software, the results of your genetic testing can come in handy as you track down relatives or build out your family tree.

What your physiological strengths and weaknesses are. Are you a natural born athlete? What things are you likely to be allergic to? Should you be taking certain supplements? Do you have a predisposition to specific health complaints? This is one of the most useful and actionable aspects of genetic testing, which allows you to understand the "hardware" you're born with and take steps to improve your health and quality of life.

Clues to your psyche. Have you always been a worrier or a stickler for detail? Your DNA results can tell you why, and whether better health practices or supplements might be in order.

How to go about getting tested:

The process is quite straightforward.

1. Go to **23andMe.com** and order your test kit.
 2. You receive the kit in the mail, provide a saliva sample and send it back.
 3. You'll need to register your kit and create a username and password.
 4. Within a four to six week period, they will sequence your DNA in an online interface. Once your results are ready, they'll email you and you can go and review your data. This will include a basic report on your ancestral pathway and a few basic interpretations of your mutations.
 5. Your raw data file can be exported as a zipped text file. For additional interpretation of your genetic makeup, you can then run the data through a couple of free websites:
 - a. **Athletigen** (<https://athletigen.com/>) - Details how your body is wired in terms of sports and athletic performance
 - b. **Genetic Genie** (<http://geneticgenie.org/>) - Will give you a methylation report and a detox report
- If you would like more help interpreting your results, a paid report can be requested from **Stratagene.com**.

Terms used:

mutation (as used by 23andMe)- Any change in the DNA, whether harmful, beneficial, or neither.

methylation - The method by which your body takes in nutrients and creates the vitamins, hormones, enzymes, etc. that it needs to be operate.

detox - Taking a toxin and transforming it, through a series of steps, to a compound that is water soluble to be able to excrete it from the body.