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Hierarchy of Needs

The Five Levels of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

By [Kendra Van Wagner](#), About.com

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Psychologist Abraham Maslow first introduced his concept of a hierarchy of needs in his 1943 paper "A Theory of Human Motivation"¹ and his subsequent book, *Motivation and Personality*.² This hierarchy suggests that people are motivated to fulfill basic needs before moving on to other needs.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs is most often displayed as a pyramid, with lowest levels of the pyramid made up of the most basic needs and more complex needs are at the top of the pyramid. Needs at the bottom of the pyramid are basic physical requirements including the need for food, water, sleep and warmth. Once these lower-level needs have been met, people can move on to the next level of needs, which are for safety and security.



Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs
J. Finkelstein

As people progress up the pyramid, needs become increasingly psychological and social. Soon, the need for love, friendship and intimacy become important. Further up the pyramid, the need for personal esteem and feelings of accomplishment become important. Like [Carl Rogers](#), Maslow emphasized the importance of self-actualization, which is a process of growing and developing as a person to achieve individual potential.

Types of Needs

Maslow believed that these needs are similar to instincts and play a major role in motivating behavior. Physiological, security, social, and esteem needs are **deficiency needs** (also known as *D-needs*), meaning that these needs arise do to deprivation. Satisfying these lower-level needs is important in order to avoid unpleasant feelings or consequences.

Maslow term the highest-level of the pyramid a **growth need** (also known as *being needs* or *B-needs*). Growth needs do not stem from a lack of something, but rather from a desire to grow as a person.

Five Levels of the Hierarchy of Needs

There are five different levels in Maslow's hierarchy of needs:

1. Physiological Needs

These include the most basic needs that are vital to survival, including the need for water, air, food, and sleep.

Maslow believed that these needs are the most basic and instinctive needs in the hierarchy because all needs become secondary until these physiological needs are met.

2. Security Needs

These include needs for safety and security. Security needs are important for survival, but they are not as demanding as the physiological needs. Examples of security needs include a desire for steady employment, health insurance, safe neighborhoods, and shelter from the environment.

3. Social Needs

These include needs for belonging, love, and affection. Maslow considered these needs to be less basic than physiological and security needs. Relationships such as friendships, romantic attachments and families help fulfill this need for companionship and acceptance, as does involvement in social, community or religious groups.

4. Esteem Needs

After the first three needs have been satisfied, esteem needs becomes increasingly important. These include the need for things that reflect on self-esteem, personal worth, social recognition, and accomplishment.

5. Self-actualizing Needs

This is the highest level of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Self-actualizing people are self-aware, concerned with personal growth, less concerned with the opinions of others, and interested fulfilling their potential.

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