

NEWS

Video: Unrolling the motor deficit in autism

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Although problems with motor skills don't constitute a core symptom of autism, they frequently appear in people with the disorder.

Beginning in the first few months of life, children later diagnosed with autism may have **trouble sitting up** and using their limbs. Later on, many of them are clumsy, have abnormal gait and struggle with fine motor skills. Several autism-related syndromes, such as Phelan-McDermid, are characterized by **low muscle tone**.

Stewart Mostofsky, director of neurocognitive and imaging research at the Kennedy Krieger Institute in Baltimore, has led several high-profile studies of motor learning in autism.

On Sunday at the **2012 Society for Neuroscience annual meeting** in New Orleans, Mostofsky explained how children with the disorder **rely on 'proprioception'** — sensory feedback from their own body — when learning to use a new tool.