How to find an idea for an independent project
1. Find a fairly recent journal article on a topic of interest to you.
2. Read the article, paying special attention to the methods used.
3. Researchers always hope to discover something general—something that has external validity (implications beyond the specific setting of the experiment, beyond the participants studied in the experiment, beyond the stimulus materials used in the experiment). Yet all of these (and other) factors are necessary limitations of the somewhat artificial experiments that we do. If the principle discovered is indeed a general one, then it should extend beyond the setting and participants and stimuli used. Identify an aspect of the method that reveals such a limitation.
4. Plan a new experiment with a different method that would extend the conclusions of the earlier one (if similar results are obtained), or would reveal limitations of the earlier one (if similar results are not obtained).
Find a fairly recent journal article on a topic that interests you. Identify an unanswered question, and some alternative possible answers. How will you find the correct answer?

See QALMRI document on web page.
Posture (whether one is standing or sitting) can influence “flanker task” performance. Will a supine posture also affect the flanker task?
Putting to a bigger hole: Golf performance relates to perceived size

Jessica K. Witt
Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana

AND

Sally A. Linkenauger, Jonathan Z. Bakdash, and Dennis R. Proffitt
University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia

Shooting into an ocean: Is basketball shooting performance related to perceived rim size?

Washington University in Saint Louis
Slightly different approach: Putting 2 and 2 together...

**Tool Use Affects Perceived Distance, But Only When You Intend to Use It**

Jessica K. Witt, Dennis R. Proffitt, and William Epstein
University of Virginia

Recent research demonstrates neurologic and behavioral differences in people's responses to the space that is within and beyond reach. The present studies demonstrated a peripheral difference as well.

**Action observation activates premotor and parietal areas in a somatotopic manner: an fMRI study.**


**Abstract**

Functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) was used to localize brain areas that were active during the observation of actions made by another individual. Object- and non-object-related actions made with different effectors (mouth, hand, and foot) were presented. Observation of both object- and non-object-related actions determined a somatotopically organized activation of premotor cortex. The somatotopic pattern was similar to that of the classical motor cortex homunculus. During the observation of object-related actions, an activation, also somatotopically organized, was additionally found in the posterior parietal lobe. Thus, when individuals observe an action, an internal replica of that action is automatically generated in their premotor cortex. In the case of object-related actions, a further object-related analysis is performed in the parietal lobe, as if the subjects were indeed using those objects. These results bring the previous concept of an action observation/execution matching system (mirror system) into a broader perspective: this system is not restricted to the ventral premotor cortex, but involves several somatotopically organized motor circuits.

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**BRIEF REPORT**

**Watch this! Observed tool use affects perceived distance**

Emily K. Bloesch · Christopher C. Davoli · Noam Roth · James R. Brockmole · Richard A. Abrams
From abstract: Observers rated the perceived animacy of adult human faces before and after adaptation to (1) adult faces, (2) child faces, and (3) dog faces.

Only human faces produced an effect. But maybe dog faces are too visually different...

Other populations, other times of day, different motor task?

Other tools?
Some experiments involve names to be matched to faces. At “study” the names and faces are presented on pictures or videos in the background, establishing a context. At “test” the faces may be presented in the same context, or a different but related one, or an unrelated one...

Material other than names and faces. More ecologically valid contexts.