

Finding your way in the world: on the neurocognitive basis of spatial memory and orientation in humans

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Abstract Spatial memory is vitally important for many daily life activities. Without it we would be continuously engaged in a laborious search for our keys or wallet, or we could not find our way back home again. Given this clear ecological relevance, it has been argued that spatial memory would work to a large extent automatically, without conscious control and awareness. In this talk, examples will be given of studies from the Utrecht Psychological Laboratory on implicit and explicit aspects

of wayfinding and object location memory in humans. Moreover, possible underlying neuranatomical correlates will be discussed, as revealed by neuropsychological studies. Finally, spatial memory research will be taken outside the laboratory by means of a study on how people lose things in real-life situations.

Keywords Spatial memory • Wayfinding • Explicit and implicit processes

