



The Frontal Lobes and Voluntary Action (Oxford Psychology Series)

By Richard Passingham

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This book succinctly demonstrates how the brain's frontal lobe is specialized for directing voluntary action. Using data from monkeys, neurological patients, and normal subjects, the author presents a flow diagram of frontal lobe operations at the systems level. Topics include the various definitions of the term "voluntary" in a neuropsychological context, how the motor cortex provides a mechanism for the execution of voluntary behavioral actions, and how the premotor areas play a role in the selection of the movements to be performed. The text also shows how the prefrontal cortex is engaged when the subject has to make new voluntary decisions, and how the basal ganglia play a critical role in response learning. The author considers how, in humans, the prefrontal cortex has been refined to allow for trial-and-error decision making, and how the premotor and prefrontal areas select between verbal responses. Psychologists, neuropsychologists, and neurophysiologists will all want to read this pathbreaking book.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Dr. Passingham does an admirable job of bridging basic aspects of movement to higher order behavior in the real world and laboratory....A major strength is parallel discussion of animal research...human lesion studies, functional neuroimaging, and physiological studies...The illustrations are helpful and well integrated with the text....The highlight of the book is the excellent discussion of physiological investigations, and lesion studies, in nonhuman primates....I would recommend this book to anyone interested in an affordable introduction to the role of the frontal lobes in motor behavior...This book will remain valuable because of its unique integration of disparate areas of research."--Richard Camicioli, *JINS*

About the Author

R. E. Passingham is at University of Oxford.

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