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## Lost in space: Is it possible to reprogram your spatial intelligence?



Postdoctoral research fellow Kristin Gagnier demonstrates one of the devices used to test how well subjects understand 3D object transformation. (Emma Lee/NewsWorks)



By Faye Flam

Do you hate maps, have trouble judging just how much will fit into a suitcase, or throw your hands up at the words *some assembly required*? Psychologists say that these are the kinds of everyday tasks that require spatial intelligence. That's the ability to understand objects in space as they are moved, rotated, cut or folded.

Science writer Faye Flam has always had a nagging suspicion that her spatial thinking might not be up to par. She says she was always "that one kid in elementary school who pledges allegiance with the left hand. I wasn't unpatriotic –just mixed up."

Flam decided to test her skills at [Temple University's Spatial Intelligence and Learning Center](#), even though she ran the risk of exposing her spatial deficiencies to the listening public.

Luckily for Flam, and for lots of us, the folks at Temple say that spatial skills are plastic and everyone can get better with practice. In the end, her prescription for improvement included a 12-week regimen of Tetris. Click on the yellow audio button above to listen to her story.

Want to test your own spatial acumen in tasks like mental rotation and geographic mapping? Click [here](#) for the "tests and instruments" page of the project's website.

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