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Why 90 per cent of humans are right-handed – 21st May 2026

Level 0

Around 90 per cent of people are right-handed. This is because of human evolution. When we first walked on two legs, our hands did more things. Our large brain thought of many things to do with our hands. If most people used the same hand, it was easier to do things like hunt, cook, and use tools.

Scientists wondered why humans, but not monkeys, are largely right-handed. Researchers compared human behaviour with monkey behaviour. A researcher said that by looking at monkeys, we can understand why many of us use our right hands. We started using our right hands millions of years ago.

Level 1

Around 90 per cent of people are right-handed. Researchers believe the answer is because of two areas of human evolution. The first is walking on two legs; the other is our large brain. When humans first walked on two legs, their hands were free to do many things. We started doing many things with our hands. If most people used the same hand, it was easier to do things like use tools, hunt, cook, and work together.

Scientists wondered why only humans are largely right-handed, but monkeys use both hands equally. The researchers compared human behaviour with monkey behaviour. The research showed that humans have longer legs compared to their arms. A researcher said: "By looking across many primate species, we can begin to understand which aspects of handedness are ancient and shared, and which are uniquely human."

Level 2

Around 90 per cent of people are right-handed. Scientists have spent years trying to find out why. Researchers in the UK believe the answer is because of two areas of human evolution. The first is walking on two legs; the other is the large size of our brain. When humans first walked on two legs, their hands were free to do things. Our brain worked out many things to do with our hands. If most people used the same hand, using tools and working with other people became easier. It was useful for doing things like hunting and cooking.

Scientists wondered why only humans are largely right-handed. Monkeys and apes use both hands equally. The researchers compared human behaviour and brain patterns with monkeys and apes. The research showed that humans have longer legs compared to their arm length. Another reason is the left side of the brain controls the right hand. It is responsible for coordination. A researcher said: "By looking across many primate species, we can begin to understand which aspects of handedness are ancient and shared, and which are uniquely human."

Level 3

Around 90 per cent of people worldwide are right-handed. Scientists have spent decades trying to find out why. Researchers from Oxford University in the UK believe they have a possible answer. Their research suggests that the answer is because of two features of human evolution. The first is walking on two legs, and the other is the large size of the human brain. When humans first started walking on two legs, their hands were free to do things. Our large brain worked out many things to do with our hands like using tools. If most people used the same hand, using tools and working with others became easier. This became useful for things like hunting and cooking.

Scientists thought the key to finding the answer was why only humans are largely right-handed. Primates (monkeys and apes) use both hands equally. The researchers compared human behaviour and brain patterns with 41 species of monkeys and apes. The research findings showed that humans have longer legs compared to their arm length. Another reason is that the left side of the brain controls the right hand. It is also responsible for motor skills and coordination. A researcher said: "By looking across many primate species, we can begin to understand which aspects of handedness are ancient and shared, and which are uniquely human."