

Helping hands: Are two better than one?

May 17 2006

Having someone help with a simple physical task often seems to be more trouble than its worth, but U.S. scientists say that perception is incorrect.

Researchers at Northwestern University have found in some cases, pairs perform better than individuals -- even when each individual thinks the other is a hindrance.

The authors of the study, including psychologists, neuroscientists and robotics researchers, were interested in the possibility of haptic communication -- that relating to the sense of touch and motion.

Many other kinds of pair interactions have been heavily studied, including facial expression, gesture, spoken language and visually observing each other's actions. The researchers wished to determine if pairs could coordinate effectively through a haptic channel of communication, which has been little studied.

Their experiment showed, despite the perceived difficulty of coordination, most pairs performed significantly faster than individuals doing the same task.

The researchers speculate that a capacity for haptic communication is a basic human ability.

The study is explained in the May issue of the journal *Psychological Science*.

Copyright 2006 by United Press International

Citation: Helping hands: Are two better than one? (2006, May 17) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2006-05-helping-hands-are-two-better.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.