

GALLERY EXPLORATION

ACTIVE LEARNING GUIDE

REACTION TIME

TEST YOUR REACTION TIME

When you see a glass getting ready to fall off the table, how quickly can you jump into action to grab the glass before it hits the ground and breaks?

How quickly you react is your reaction time! When your nervous system recognizes a stimulus – like a glass falling from a table – it directs your muscles to jump into action. Special cells called neurons carry messages to and from your brain and spinal cord to get you to react to the stimulus – like jumping into action to grab the falling glass. All this activity in your nervous system typically happens in a very short amount of time. The amount of time it takes for you to react is measured as your reaction time!

Testing Reaction Time:

- Ruler
- Person Partner

Testing Your Reaction Time:

1. Have a partner stand holding their hand out in front of them. Their thumb and pointer finger should be formed into a pincher.
2. You hold the ruler between your partner's open thumb and pointer finger pincher.
Note: The ruler should be able to move freely between their fingers – they should not be pinching the ruler just yet
3. At a random moment, you let go of the ruler and your partner tries to grab it before it falls to the ground
4. Measure how quickly your partner grabs the ruler. Does your partner get quicker with each try?

