

VATSAL V. PATEL

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EDUCATION

Yale University <i>PhD in Engineering & Applied Sciences (Robotics)</i> Advisor: Prof. Aaron M. Dollar	<i>2019 - Present</i>
University of California, Berkeley <i>BS in Mechanical Engineering (2017), MS in Mechanical Engineering (2018)</i> GPA: 3.92 (High Honors) in BS, 4.00 in MS	<i>2014 - 2018</i>

RESEARCH AREAS

Dexterous Manipulation, Robot Grasping, In-Hand Manipulation, Force Sensing Mechanisms, Parallel Robots, Mechanics, Design Optimization, Motion Planning

RESEARCH AND WORK EXPERIENCE

Yale GRAB Lab, Graduate Researcher	<i>Aug 2019 - present</i>
• Designed and optimized parallel mechanism-based hands capable of dexterous in-hand manipulation	
• Developed motion synthesis methods for unified manipulation planning with arms and dexterous hands	
• Evaluated robot hands through workspace characterizations and real-world tasks demonstrations	
Boston Dynamics AI Institute, Research Intern	<i>June 2023 - August 2023</i>
• Worked on the dynamic mobile manipulation team to advance the state of robot hand hardware	
• Devised and evaluated methods to design tendon-driven controllable and passive adaptable mechanisms	
• Implemented sampling-based trajectory optimization algorithms for fast and dynamic mobile grasping	
Intuitive Surgical, Mechanical Engineer	<i>Jan-Jul 2019, Intern: Summers '17 & '18</i>
• Developed, tested, and refined designs of mechanical subsystems on new robotic surgery platforms	
• Ran performance tests on full-scale system prototypes to inform subsequent design iterations	
• Amplified mechanical performance of surgical instruments by 30% to improve their life and efficiency	
Berkeley Automation Lab (AUTOLAB), Graduate Researcher	<i>2017 - 2018</i>
• Implemented intermittent sync autonomously on surgical robot and platform with 81% success rate	
• Built a 6-DOF platform mimicking anatomical motions for surgical robotics experiments	
• Developed shielded-implant mechanisms for safer radiation dose delivery in brachytherapy	

HONORS AND AWARDS

Robotics: Science and Systems (RSS) Pioneer	<i>2025</i>
Selected for cohort of 33 (~14.6% acceptance) top early-career robotics researchers	
Raymond John Wean Foundation Fellow in Engineering	<i>2020 - 2024</i>
Yale fellowship funding doctoral programs for high-performing students	
Yale Ventures Graduate Fellow	<i>2019 - 2020</i>
Commercializing research innovations with Blavatnik Fellows and Entrepreneurs-in-Residence	
Berkeley Mechanical Engineering Citation Award	<i>2018</i>
Distinguished honors at graduation for academic achievement and outstanding service	
Outstanding Graduate Student Instructor Award	<i>2018</i>
Received for outstanding work in teaching Berkeley courses nominated by the department	

PUBLICATIONS

Journal Articles

Patel, V. V., Seewald, A., Dollar, A. M. (in review) “Re-envisioning Force-Torque Sensing: Simple Six-Axis Sensor with a Single Camera and Fiducial Markers.” 2025.

Patel, V. V., Dollar, A. M. “Combining Grasping and Rotation with a Spherical Robot Hand Mechanism.” *Nature Machine Intelligence*. 2025.

Patel, V. V., Liarokapis, M. V., Dollar, A. M. “Open Robot Hardware: Progress, Benefits, Challenges, and Best Practices.” *IEEE Robotics & Automation Magazine (RAM)*. 2023.

McCann, C. M.* , **Patel, V. V.***, Dollar, A. M. “The Stewart Hand: A Highly Dexterous, Six-Degrees-of-Freedom Manipulator Based on the Stewart-Gough Platform.” *IEEE Robotics & Automation Magazine (RAM), Special Issue on Emerging Paradigms for Robotic Manipulation*. 2021.

Conference Papers

Dong, Y., Kim, J., **Patel, V. V.**, Feng, H., Dollar, A. M. “Model Q-II: An Underactuated Hand with Enhanced Grasping Modes and Primitives for Dexterous Manipulation” *IEEE International Conference on Robotics and Automation (ICRA), Atlanta, USA*. 2025.

Pan, C., **Patel, V. V.**, et al. “Fluxbot: The Next Generation-Design and Validation of a Wireless, Open-Source Mechatronic CO₂ Flux Sensing Chamber” *ACM SIGCAS/SIGCHI Conference on Computing and Sustainable Societies (COMPASS)*. 2024.

Patel, V. V., Rakita, D., Dollar, A. M. “An Analysis of Unified Manipulation with Robot Arms and Dexterous Hands via Optimization-based Motion Synthesis” *IEEE International Conference on Robotics and Automation (ICRA), London, UK*. 2023.

Patel, V. V., Dollar, A. M. “Robot Hand based on a Spherical Parallel Mechanism for Within-Hand Rotations about a Fixed Point.” *IEEE International Conference on Intelligent Robots and Systems (IROS), Prague, Czech Republic*. 2021.

Patel, V. V., Morgan, A. S., Dollar, A. M. “Highly Underactuated Radial Gripper for Automated Planar Grasping and Part Fixturing.” *IEEE International Conference on Intelligent Robots and Systems (IROS), Las Vegas, NV*. 2020.

McPherson, A. I. W., **Patel, V. V.**, Downey, P. R., Alvi, A. A., Abbott, M. E., Stuart, H. S. “Motor-Augmented Wrist-Driven Orthosis: Flexible Grasp Assistance for People with Spinal Cord Injury.” International Conference of the IEEE Engineering in Medicine & Biology Society (EMBC). 2020.

Thananjeyan, B., Tanwani, A., Ji, J., Fer, D., **Patel, V. V.**, Krishnan, S., Goldberg, K. “Optimizing Robot-Assisted Surgery Suture Plans to Avoid Joint Limits and Singularities.” *IEEE International Symposium on Medical Robotics (ISMR), Atlanta, GA*. 2019.

Ji, J., Krishnan, S., **Patel, V. V.**, Fer, D., Goldberg, K. “Learning 2D Surgical Camera Motion From Demonstrations.” *IEEE International Conference on Automation Science & Engineering (CASE), Munich, Germany*. 2018.

Patel, V. V.*, Krishnan, S.* , Goncalves, A., Goldberg, K. “SPRK: A low-cost stewart platform for motion study in surgical robotics.” *IEEE International Symposium on Medical Robotics (ISMR), Atlanta, GA*. 2018.

Patel, V. V.*, Krishnan, S.* , Goncalves, A., Chen, C., Boyd, W. D., Goldberg, K. “Using intermittent synchronization to compensate for rhythmic body motion during autonomous surgical cutting and debridement.” *IEEE International Symposium on Medical Robotics (ISMR), Atlanta, GA*. 2018.

LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE

Yale Graduate Engineering Community (GECO) Organizer	<i>2020-present</i>
Organized monthly mentorship and social for 300+ Yale engineering graduate students.	
Yale Pauli Murray College Graduate Affiliate	<i>2019-2025</i>
Served as a graduate student resource and organized programming for students in the residential college.	
Yale Graduate & Professional Student Senate (GPSS) Senator	<i>2020-2024</i>
Worked with the University to advocate graduate student concerns representing the Sciences constituency.	
Yale Mechanical Engineering & Materials Science (MEMS) Mentor	<i>2023</i>
Mentoring incoming MEMS students and serving as a resource in their transition to Yale.	
Yale Office of International Students & Scholars (OISS) Fellow	<i>2021</i>
Organized and assisted programming for new international graduate students at Yale.	
Yale Mentor for Minority Students in STEM (YMMSS)	<i>2021</i>
Mentored traditionally underrepresented students in science and engineering at Yale.	
Yale Flipped Science Fair (FSF) Presenter	<i>2021</i>
Presented my current research tailored to excite middle school students.	
Yale Peabody Museum's Education Volunteer Docent	<i>2019 - 2020</i>
Taught middle & elementary school student workshops with hands-on programs and tours.	
Academic Service	

Active reviewer for IEEE, ASME, ACM conferences (ICRA, IROS, Robosoft), and journals (RAL, TRO, JMR, JMD, SIGGRAPH).

TEACHING FELLOWSHIPS

Mechanical Engineering Capstone I & II	<i>2023-24, 2021-22</i>
Teaching Fellow (Yale University). Advised project groups and led partnerships with external sponsors.	
Sustainability and You / Sciences Distributional	<i>Fall 2022</i>
Teaching Fellow (Yale University). Developed coursework and organized term assignments.	
Mechanical Design	<i>Spring 2021</i>
Teaching Fellow (Yale University). Led lab sections, tutored students, and organized term projects.	
Feedback Control Systems	<i>Fall 2018, Spring 2018</i>
Graduate Student Instructor (UC Berkeley). Led lab sections, guest lectured, and tutored students.	
Mechanical Engineering Laboratory	<i>Spring 2018</i>
Graduate Student Instructor (UC Berkeley). Supported lab group projects and graded team reports.	