DAILY MAIL

Haven't we met before? Why we recognise someone's face but struggle to remember their name

By [Daily Mail Reporter](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/home/search.html?s=&authornamef=Daily+Mail+Reporter)  
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It happens to all of us - you bump into someone you recognise but whose name you simply cannot remember.

Now scientists have identified why we are often unable to link a face with a name.

We stand a much better chance of remembering a name if we have extra clues as to where, or when, we first encountered the person, researchers from the University of Bristol said.

The study found that when we need to remember that a particular object, for example a face, occurred in a particular place, or at a particular time, multiple brain regions have to work together - not independently.

It has been known for some time that three brain regions appear to have specific roles in memory processing.

The perirhinal cortex seems to be critical for our ability to recognise whether an individual object is novel or familiar; the hippocampus is important for recognising places and for navigation; while the medial prefrontal cortex is associated with higher brain functions.

The Bristol researchers, however, are the first to look at situations where these brain regions interact all together, rather than considering each one individually.

Co-lead researcher Dr Clea Warburton said: 'We are very excited to discover this important brain circuit.

'We're now studying how memory information is processed within it, in the hope we can then understand how our own "internal library" system works.'

The team investigated the neural basis of our ability to recognise different types of stimuli under different conditions.

Of specific interest were two types of recognition memory: ‘object-in-place recognition memory’ (remembering where we put our keys), and ‘temporal order recognition memory’ (when we last had them).

Neither ‘object-in-place’ or ‘temporal order recognition’ memories could be formed if communication between the hippocampus and either the perirhinal cortex, or the medial prefrontal cortex, was broken.

In other words, disconnecting the regions prevented the ability to remember both where objects had been, and in which order.

Finding that these regions must all act together has important implications for understanding memory and helping treat people with memory disorders such as Alzheimer’s disease.

The research is published in the Journal of Neuroscience.

Read more: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-2022319/Havent-met-Why-recognise-someones-face-struggle-remember-name.html#ixzz28oQXZEW0>   
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