



PROPRIOCEPTION

WHAT IS PROPRIOCEPTION?

In common understanding, most people think humans have five senses – sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell. In reality, we all have at least eight senses. The extra senses include our sense of temperature, balance (called vestibular) and proprioception.

Proprioception is our sense of where our body is. Both in relation to the world around us, and in its own movements. Proprioceptors are a type of nerve which runs throughout the body, **four muscle layers deep**, giving feedback to the brain when activated.

Proprioception is one of the body's most critical senses. It is integral to feeling safe and confident in our body, as well as for executing movement.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN PROPRIOCEPTION GOES WRONG?

Sometimes proprioception doesn't work quite right. People with impacted proprioceptive systems won't be able to feel their bodies properly. This can lead to behaviour such as:

- Hiding in small spaces
- Climbing up precarious edges or onto elevated platforms
- Wanting to hold an adult's hand whenever walking
- Frequently seeking hugs
- Disliking open spaces

It also makes **all movements more difficult**. For example, imagine how hard it would be to pick up a drink bottle, when you don't know where your hand is to begin with – let alone where its meant to go.

For all of the above reasons, people with less proprioception often have higher levels of **stress, exhaustion and big emotions**. How could you not?

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

First and foremost, **seek to understand** what life must be like without proprioception. Consider watching a video like this one – a case study of a man who lost his proprioceptive sense altogether:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pMEROPOK6v8>



Secondly, chat to your therapist about learning how to give proprioceptive input at home.