

## Social implications

If you lack spatial awareness this may affect your social relationships. Your behaviour may appear to be rigid and inflexible when interacting with others. People may think you have poor manners. You may inadvertently invade someone else's personal space, and not be able to understand the effect on others of something you have said or done. This can make relationships with teachers, colleagues and friends difficult. You may have difficulty understanding exactly what is expected of you.

The spatially disordered person struggles with order in the environment and may either give up trying to maintain order completely and live in chaos, or try to impose a rigid and inflexible order on their world. This can have social and academic implications. It may make it difficult to fit in with a routine devised by someone else at work. It may also make it difficult to work with a colleague who finds it difficult to fit in with your way of doing things. It may give those around you a lower impression of your capabilities than is in fact the case.

## Implications in everyday life

The following everyday activities are examples of things which may need more patience and practice than you would expect. Everyday activities that may need more patience and practice to improve

- Reading maps
- Tying shoelaces
- Driving
- Giving and receiving change
- Finding your way around an unfamiliar place
- Judging distances and capacity (road safety and pouring liquids)
- Throwing/catching
- Planning and ordering a sequence of events (shopping/housework)
- Remembering and acting on a sequence of instructions based on the world around you
- Remembering abstract directions given to you to help you arrive at a place
- Physical awkwardness (using a knife and fork/dressing/judging steps etc)

The everyday activities are a mixture of things which we learn at different ages but all of them share the same skills.

Prepared for the TSSS by  
Pat Rogers, retired Head  
Teacher and TSSS member

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T +44 (0)141 952 8006  
F +44 (0)141 952 8025  
E [Turner.syndrome@tss.org.uk](mailto:Turner.syndrome@tss.org.uk)

Helpline: 0870 230 7520  
Registered Charity No 1080507

[www.tss.org.uk](http://www.tss.org.uk)

Further information about  
Turner Syndrome can be  
obtained from:

Arlene Smyth,  
Executive Officer, Turner  
Syndrome Support Society [UK]

13 Simpson Court,  
11 South Ave,  
Clydebank Business Park,  
Clydebank G81 2NR.

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Turner Syndrome Support Society  
13 Simpson Court, 11 South Avenue  
Clydebank Business Park  
Clydebank, G81 2NR  
Tel: 0141 952 8006  
[www.tss.org.uk](http://www.tss.org.uk)

# Spatial Awareness

FACTSHEET FIVE



# Spatial Awareness

People with Turner syndrome are sometimes told that they lack ‘Spatial awareness’. You may not understand what it is or just how much it can affect your day-to-day life. This leaflet explains what spatial awareness is and how it can impact on your everyday activities.



## Importance of spatial awareness

Spatial awareness is needed for a wide range of activities in life. If you lack spatial awareness then you may find many daily activities more difficult to carry out or understand.

## Definition

Spatial awareness is, very simply, an organised awareness of the objects in the space around us, and also an awareness of our body's position in that space.

Spatial understanding is important in many areas, including mathematics, spelling, punctuation and the use of capital letters. It is also important in understanding time, drawing, copying, ordering, changing points of view and handwriting. These are all skills that we need to use everyday and for someone who finds them difficult, even if they have a good basic intelligence, it can be very frustrating, and lead to social misunderstandings.

These activities are perceived as relatively simple to the intelligent person who is expected to grasp them easily. However, such activities will need more reinforcement and practice for an intelligent person with spatial awareness difficulties.

## Implications at school: Reading and writing

Reading and comprehension require spatial skills. To understand grammar and sentence structure you need to be able to track the meaning through the text that you are reading. This is true both in terms of an individual sentence and following a storyline, as well as understanding the development of an argument in an essay.

Punctuation may also be a problem for somebody with poor spatial understanding. If the person does not perceive the pauses of speech in everyday life, they may not see the need for punctuation when they are writing. Handwriting is easy and effortless with accurate motor-spatial control, and very difficult without it.

Writing and drawing require both visual spatial skills i.e you need to know where to put the pencil on the page, and motor spatial control i.e you must be able to make the pencil go where you want it to.

## Mathematics

A great deal of spatial skill is required in order to understand concepts like place, value, signs, borrowing and division.

The ability to sequence or arrange things in a successive order, and keep to a set of sequential rules while solving problems is a spatial skill. Time is spatial; it requires an understanding of ordered sequences. Geometry also requires understanding.

