



Ticklish - Why can't you tickle yourself?

Fact

- When someone tries to tickle you, you can feel lots of different things – it can feel funny, but it can also make you feel nervous and scared. When someone sneaks up on you and tickles you it gives you a surprise too and your body reacts by feeling ticklish and you laugh.
- There's a part of your brain called the cerebellum that keeps tabs on everything that happens in and around your body. When something happens to one part of your body it lets the rest of your body know. When you move your hand, it says "Oi, the left hand is moving!" to the rest of your body and so on.
- So when you try to tickle yourself your brain knows that your body is about to be tickled it say's "Don't panic, just relax" and you don't feel the emotions that would go with being tickled by someone else.

Do you know

- Scientists have been studying the theory of tickling for many years using specially made "tickling machines"!
- If someone was tickling you and you managed to remain relaxed and calm the tickling would not affect you as much.

Experiments you can do

Attach a feather to a stick and get someone else to tickle you with it. Firstly, get them to tickle you when you tell them to, then get them to tickle you when you don't expect it. See what the difference is.

Try tickling yourself with the feather on a stick. Does it feel ticklish?

Other Investigations

Next time someone is tickling you, try to stay calm and relaxed. Close your eyes, breathe calmly and see what happens. Does their tickling feel as ticklish as normal?