

They Never Forget a Face. Research Delves into How ‘Super-Recognizers’ Can Do This.

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Super-recognizers never forget a face. They need to focus on it only once to instantly recognize it again, even if they encounter it years later, and sometimes even if they see only one feature, such as the eyes.

They also can get a pretty good idea of what a face looks like in profile if they initially see it straight on. Most ordinary people see faces differently. Their brains take a frontal facial snapshot, which usually is how they remember it — if they can remember it at all.

“Super-recognizers definitely have an extraordinary skill that scientists have only been investigating in the last few years,” says Josh Davis, [professor in applied psychology](#) at the University of Greenwich in London, and a super-recognizer expert. “We are only just learning about how they do it.”

Super-recognizers belong to an elite group — experts estimate their numbers at less than 2 percent of the population — and are at the top end of a facial cognition spectrum that includes [prosopagnosia](#), or “face blindness,” or exceptionally poor facial recognition, at the bottom.

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