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## Wayne's Magic & Illusion Blog

By [Wayne Kawamoto](#), About.com Guide to Magic & Illusion

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## Magic and the Brain

Saturday November 14, 2009

[Penn and Teller](#) and [Mac King](#) are featured in an interesting [article](#) that discusses how magic works on the human brain. The research is being conducted by the Barrow Neurological Institute in Phoenix, Arizona and the results are not only telling, but may one day help to assist in the diagnosis of autism.

According to the [article](#), the researchers concluded that magicians sometimes understand the workings of the human brain better than they did. "The more we thought about it, the more we realized that magicians actually had skills that we didn't have, as scientists," says Dr. Stephen Macknik in the story.

Mac King performed for a subject who's eye movements were closely monitored. The conclusion? "You think you can see everything all at once, when in fact, you can't," says Macknik in the story. "So, the fact is that magicians are able to take advantage of that by knowing that you can only focus in one place while they do something somewhere else."

"We predict that autistics will detect the method in a magic trick better than someone with a Ph.D.," Macknik also says in the story. "Autistics are people with deficits in joint attention, so they not only can't pay attention very well to people and where they're supposed to pay attention, but they're kind of repulsed by it."

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