

Lefties have a better chance of surviving the Zombie Apocalypse!

Mark Pavilons



I'm referred to as 'awkward, gauche, sinister' all because I'm a southpaw.

But I don't mind. Thankfully, my mom had the foresight to step in and tell my elementary teachers not to force me into their right-handed world. 'He's fine the way he is,' she would say.

Thanks, mom.

Figures show we remain in the minority, but our ranks are swelling. Left-handed people make up roughly 11% of the population, a dramatic rise from the 3% we occupied 100 years ago.

Three of the last four presidents are left-handed -- Obama, Clinton and George Bush Sr. We lefties are in good company. Other famous lefties include Jerry Seinfeld, Jay Leno, Carol Burnett, James Woods, Rick Moranis, Kate Hudson, Charlie Chaplin, da Vinci, Thomas Jefferson, Ron Perlman, David Letterman, Celine Dion ...

'Left-handedness is important because more than 10 per cent of people have their brains organized in a qualitatively different way to other people. That has to be interesting. When the rate of a [variable trait] changes, then there have to be causes, and they are interesting as well,' said lead researcher Ian Christopher McManus of the University College London.

In the Victorian era, we were a 'visible minority' that hindered our success. We found it more difficult to find marriage partners, married later, and had fewer children so that fewer of the relevant genes went into the gene pool.

How sad is that?

For thousands of years, the Devil has been associated with the left hand and has been portrayed as being left-handed in pictures. In France it was held that witches greet Satan 'avec le bras gauche' or with the left hand. It is also suggested that the Devil watches us over the left shoulder.

Left-handedness was one of the traits that many believed to be present in 'the worst characters among the human species.'

Well I must protest.

In 20th-century Britain, children had their left hands tied down to make them use their right one. British child psychologists who supported this retraining method also preached that children who used their left hand were simply demonstrating 'a defiant personality that needed to be corrected as soon as possible.'

Defiant, no, just assertive! Okay, I have been known to talk back once in a while.

But enough about bunk. Let's get back to reality.

We are at a disadvantage and so we are challenged. Asserting ourselves has led us to the top of the heap, if I may be so bold. Yet we are plagued.

Lefties are more likely to have allergies; prone to migraines; more likely to be insomniacs and are three times more likely to become alcoholics than righties. No comment.

Now some good news. We are more likely to be on extreme poles of the intelligence scale and are better at 3-D perception, thinking and multi-tasking.

Southpaws tend to make especially good baseball players, tennis players, swimmers, boxers and fencers. Almost 40% of the top tennis players in the world are lefties.

We recover from strokes faster; college graduates go on to become 26% richer than right-handed graduates.

On a QWERTY keyboard there are 1,447 English words typed solely with the left hand, while only 187 are typed with the right hand.

Just in case we need it, we adjust to seeing under water quicker. We can't roll our tongues as easily and our nails grow faster on the left hand. I don't get that whole rolling your tongue thing anyway. My wife and son can do it, but I don't see how this is a survival tool. It just looks silly.

Researchers conjecture that the advantage of being left-handed in a violent society isn't just a matter of survival, it's a matter of natural selection and allows one generation to pass its left-handed traits on to the next. Here, here!

Being left-handed may be an advantage in fights, where a surprise left hook can be a bonus. This advantage shows up in many sports.

So, even without weapons, I have a better chance of surviving the Zombie Apocalypse! I like that. I can hardly wait to test that theory!

One would think that being left-handed isn't that big of a deal. Yet, time and again, people point it out when they see me furiously taking notes. I have developed an odd way of jotting down the facts. I write top to bottom, top right to top left of a page. I believe that's how it's done in Arabic. Nevertheless, it keeps the fleshy part of my hand clean because it doesn't drag across fresh ink. I think that was one of the reasons teachers found lefties to be dirty.

At dinner events, you can find my knife permanently affixed to my left hand, while my right clutches the fork. No switching for this lad.

Fellow southpaws become brothers and sisters in this unique fellowship. We cling together in a united front, proud of our abilities and trials and tribulations throughout history.

We are strong.

Bring on the Zombies!