



# ATNR

## WHAT IS THE ATNR REFLEX?

The Asymmetrical Tonic Neck Reflex (ATNR) is a primitive reflex in infants that is triggered by turning the head to one side. The arm and leg on the side the head is facing straighten, while the opposite side's arm and leg bend. This causes the baby to take a “fencing” posture. The ATNR is typically present at birth and begins to integrate around 4-6 months of age as more mature motor skills emerge.

## WHAT IS THE FUNCTION OF THE ATNR REFLEX?

The ATNR plays several roles in early development:

**Hand-Eye Coordination Foundation:** By bringing the arm into the baby's line of sight, ATNR helps the infant begin to develop hand-eye coordination, which is essential for reaching and grasping.

**Differentiation of Sides:** It helps infants become aware of their right and left sides, which is fundamental for bilateral coordination and body awareness.

**Support for Rolling:** The ATNR assists with early rolling movements, helping babies initiate turning from their back to their side, which is an important developmental milestone.

**Cross-Pattern Movements:** The reflex builds the foundation for later cross-lateral movements, which are essential for crawling and walking.

## IMPLICATIONS WHEN RETAINED

Retained ATNR can lead to issues with hand-eye coordination, crossing the midline (important for reading and writing), and difficulty with tasks that require bilateral coordination, like using both hands together.

