

## Genetics of being a daredevil

Watching participants in slopestyle and half-pipe skiing and snowboarding flip, curl, cartwheel and otherwise contort themselves in the air during the Winter Olympics competition, many of us have probably wondered not only how the athletes managed to perform such feats but also why. Helpfully, a recent study of the genetics of risk-taking intimates that their behavior may be motivated, at least in part, by their DNA.

In recent years, scientists zeroed in on various sections of genes that affect the brain's levels of or response to the neurotransmitter dopamine, a substance that is known to influence our feelings of pleasure, reward and gratification. People who engage in and enjoy extreme, daredevil conduct, researchers presumed, would likely process dopamine differently than those of us content to watch.

**Read the full, original story:** [The Genetics of Being a Daredevil](#)