

How did humans first learn to use tools?

Chimpanzees and bonobos are the two closest living relatives of the human species – the ultimate tool-using ape. Yet, despite being so closely related on the evolutionary tree, wild chimpanzees and bonobos differ hugely in the way they use tools. Chimpanzees show the most diverse range of tool use outside of humans. For example, chimpanzees use sticks to ‘fish’ for ants and termites, stones to crack nuts, as well as tools for grooming and communication. Bonobos rarely use tools and never to forage for food. The question of ‘what makes a tool user?’ is a key one in human evolution, says researcher Dr Kathelijne Koops, and the origins of human tool mastery could lie in the gulf between tool use in chimpanzees and bonobos. Is it to do with the environment the apes live in and the surrounding opportunities for tool use? Or perhaps the opportunities to learn from other apes through social contact? Or something deep-rooted. Something intrinsic.

Chimpanzees are object-oriented, in a way that bonobos are not,” said Koops, who conducted the work at Cambridge University’s Division of Biological Anthropology and at Zurich University’s Anthropological Institute and Museum. “Given the close evolutionary relationship between these two species and humans, insights into the tool use difference between chimpanzees and bonobos can help us identify the conditions that drove the evolution of human technology. ”

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis. Read full, original post: [Tool use is ‘innate’ in chimpanzees but not bonobos, their closest evolutionary relative](#)