

## Why don't humans have tails?

Why did some primates keep their tails, while humans and [apes](#) didn't? Tail loss is thought to be part of the backstory for humans evolving to be bipedal, but precisely how we lost our tails is a question that scientists have long sought to answer.

Recently, researchers uncovered a [genetic](#) clue about why humans have no tails. They identified a so-called jumping gene related to tail growth that may have leaped into a different location in the genome of a primate species millions of years ago. And in doing so, it created a mutation that took our tails away.

Follow the latest news and policy debates on sustainable agriculture, biomedicine, and other 'disruptive' innovations. Subscribe to our newsletter.

[SIGN UP](#)

As it happens, humans DO still have tails — when we're embryos. Tails are a trait that can be traced back to [Earth's](#) first vertebrates, so when human embryos develop, we briefly have tails — vertebrae included — during the earliest stages of our growth, as do all animals with backbones. But after about eight weeks, most embryonic human tails completely disappear. They are lost through a process known as apoptosis.... After that, the only remnant of these lost tails in humans is about three or four vertebrae that form the coccyx, or tailbone.

[This is an excerpt. Read the original post here.](#)